

WISDOM (*HIKMA*)  
AND  
PHILOSOPHY (*FALSAFA*)  
IN  
ISLAMIC THOUGHT  
(as a framework for inquiry)

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## Abstract

In this study the following two hypothesis are researched:

1. "Wisdom" is the fundamental aspect of Islamic thought on which Islamic civilisation was established through Islamic law (*Sharī'a*), theology (*kalām*), philosophy (*falsafa*) and mysticism (Sufism).
2. "Due to the first hypothesis Islamic philosophy is not only a commentary on the Greek philosophy or a new form of Neoplatonism but a native Islamic wisdom understanding on the form of theoretical study".

The present thesis consists of ten chapters dealing with the concept of practical wisdom (*ḥikma*) and theoretical wisdom (philosophy or *falsafa*). At the end there are a general conclusion, glossary and bibliography.

In the introduction (Chapter One) the definition of wisdom and philosophy is established as a conceptual ground for the above two hypothesis. In the following chapter (Chapter Two) I focused on the historical background of these two concepts by giving a brief history of ancient wisdom and Greek philosophy as sources of Islamic thought. In the following two chapters (Chapter Three and Four) I tried to bring out a possible definition of Islamic wisdom in the Qur'ān and Sunna on which Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), philosophy (*falsafa*) and mysticism (Sufism) consisted of. As a result of the above conceptual approaching, I tried to reach a new definition for wisdom (*ḥikma*) as a method that helps in the establishment of a new Islamic way of life and civilisation for our contemporary life.

In the further chapters, I have investigated "Wisdom in Islamic Jurisprudence", (Chapter Five) "Wisdom in Islamic Philosophy" (Chapter Six, Seven, Eight) and "Wisdom in Islamic Mysticism" (Chapter Nine), as the main body of Islamic thought. As a result of the acceptance that Islamic philosophy were accepted as the theoretical ground to wisdom understanding by many Muslim philosophers, this subjects detailed in three separate chapter under the heading of "Wisdom in Islamic Philosophy". I highlighted first of all the place of wisdom in Islamic philosophical writing, then in the Qur'ān and Sunna, Hellenistic Greek philosophy

and Ancient civilisations (India and Persia) were researched as the sources of Islamic Philosophy. To do so in the first place respectively *Kalām*, Dahriyya and Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwān al-Ṣāfā*) were researched as the first systematic Islamic thought. In the second place, I detailed *Mashshāī* philosophy as the main body of Islamic Philosophy.

In the above mentioned chapters, I argued that Islamic philosophy is not pure philosophy which was established through commentary on Greek philosophy alone. In fact, Islamic philosophy as a kind of natural and theoretical wisdom includes both the divine and worldly dimension. However, I have given more attention to the Islamic jurisprudence and mysticism because wisdom as practical knowledge has found more room in practice of Islamic mysticism (Sufism) and early application of jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

In the last chapter I have focused on the reasons of decline both practical wisdom (*ḥikma*) and theoretical wisdom (*falsafa*) in the Islamic world. On these grounds I propound that Islam can be better understood and reformed on the ground of wisdom. Therefore wisdom can be practised as a framework for both Islamic studies and practical way of life as a dynamic method and humanistic aspect. In the end of the thesis beside a general conclusion I highlight also some practical recommendation for further Islamic studies.



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1 - A philosophical term that indicates balanced behaviour between any two extremes of ethical behaviour or attitude.



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# Transliteration

## Consonants

ا	ʾ	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	ك	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	n
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	ه	h
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	w
د	d	ع	ʿ	ى	y
ذ	dh	غ	gh	ة	a (in construct state -at)
ر	r	ف	f		

## Vowels:

### Short:

ا      a

و      u

ي      i

### Long:

ا      اى      ā

و      وى      ū

ي      يى      ī



## P r e f a c e

Arabic words and proper names have been transcribed with diacritical marks according to the example of the new edition of 'The Encyclopaedia of Islam. Only there are some exceptions such as that in place of letter K, k, I used the Q, q, and in place of Dj, dj, I used J, j. For example instead of the Kur'ān I used the Qur'ān, and instead of Djuhanī, I used Juhanī.

All transliterated words have been italicised except the names of well known places, and technical names such as Mecca, Allah, Qur'ān, Sunna, Sufism, and Mu'tazila. In the order of bibliography, biography and glossaries which took place at the end of this thesis, Arabic article 'al' have been ignored.

In the rendering the Qur'anic verses into English I have adopted the translation on Dr. Muḥammad Taqī-ud-Dīn Al-Hilālī & Dr. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān's translation (The Nobel Qur'ān, Riyadh-1994). However, it is necessary to state that I have given some extra information in brackets.

At the end of this thesis there are a glossary of foreign vocabulary, mostly Arabic technical terms, and bibliography. However, if it is necessary the meaning of foreign terms and biographies of thinkers were also given either in the text or footnotes.

All dates are indicated according to the Gregorian calendar because the thesis includes both Muslim and non-Muslim philosophy and wisdom understanding as a whole. If the date is before Christ I used B.C. and no mark used for A.D.

## Scope and Limitation of study

The thesis was originally conceived as an investigation into the concept of wisdom and philosophy within the framework of the Islamic Religion. I think that in the main this originally posited idea is recognisable as the leitmotiv of the finished work.

Having said this, I think that the reader who attends to the current thesis may be struck by the diversity of themes and sometimes seemingly brief treatment rendered to them. On close analysis I have identified four themes other than that of wisdom which appear with such regularity and consume such significant portions of the finished piece that they might be viewed as sections in themselves. These themes I considered as Sufism, *kalām*, *fiqh* and philosophy.

It is personally of some regret that the direction which the thesis took in terms of the crystallisation of the additional themes meant that I was unable to pursue the central theme that I would ideally have wished. In the event my ideas were ultimately constrained by the requirements of concision. For this reason, in these chapters my aim is not to investigate the detail of the Muslim philosophers' thought, but rather I focused on the main ideas.

Nevertheless, this regret is tempered by the view that the direction taken was a reasonable one and in no way detracted from the fruitfulness of the exercise. It is for others to judge the usefulness of the work now completed, although for any part I would like to concentrate on the significance I attach to the present work.

In view of this I think the present work really constitutes a type of open ended prolegomena. I say open ended in the hope that the themes discussed might be regarded as valid ground for further, more detailed inquiry, whether by myself or more able scholars. This is my sincere hope.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction:

To explain and examine Islamic wisdom and philosophy it is useful to highlight the meaning of the two concepts, wisdom and philosophy, as a starting point. It is also relevant to focus on ancient wisdom literature and the history of the Greek philosophy as influencing factors that have contributed to the formation of Islamic wisdom and philosophy along with Islamic sources.

#### A- WISDOM

##### 1- Definition:

The Encyclopaedia of Religion gives the etymological root of wisdom as follows: The Indo-European root of the term wisdom, *ueid-*, means 'perceiving', and 'seeing'. The German language has preserved the ancient connection between *weisheit* (wisdom), *wissen* (knowledge), and *wissenschaft* (science). Therefore wisdom is practical knowledge which depends on what a wise person has seen.<sup>1</sup>

The other account stresses that the term 'wisdom' (*wisdōm*) is comparable in meaning to the Greek '*sophia*' (practical wisdom) which was used with reference to practical arts.<sup>2</sup> Today in many other languages 'wisdom' is synonymous with knowledge, prudence, common sense, deep understanding, discretion, insight and intelligence. In general, wisdom can be defined as an ability to think and act, utilising knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight.<sup>3</sup> The technical meaning of wisdom is given as the capacity of judging rightly in matters relating to the conduct of life.

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1 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 393.

2 - Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion, Edited by William L. Reese, p.630.

3 - Collins Softback English Dictionary, General Consultant: M. J. Sinclair, p. 1714.



However wisdom is not identical with any concept which took place in the above paragraphs. But wisdom helps us to chose our way in any particular circumstance. In the same way wisdom is not a function of intelligence. Many people whose education has been simple are much wiser than those who have learned a lot from books. Because living may teach more about wisdom than traditional books. Also wisdom is more about perspective than about detail; wisdom is not at all the same as cleverness. Cleverness is about how we get information and how we use information. Wisdom is about how the information fits into the world around and our own values.<sup>4</sup>

There are two other important aspects of wisdom. The first relates to an area which can be described as the art of "living well". The second is concerned with reflection on existence and Divine revelation. Wisdom as manifested in the ancient civilisations accepted the view that God was the Reality and this world merely a dream. Therefore the person endowed with wisdom had a pedagogical responsibility to awaken those around him from their dream state through a realisation and remembrance of their position in this world.

Wisdom has taken these broad forms: on an anthropocentric level it represents a guide for the practical aspects of life; it also establishes a rational system. On a transcendent level it offers an explanation about God and His attributes. Therefore knowledge of wisdom comes both from religious Divine sources and from daily human experiences such as study and reflection on nature and human-beings. Thus, wisdom is a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

The other characteristic of wisdom is that it was personified as a female. For example, in Buddhist philosophy wisdom is the highest queen (*Malkhuth*) of the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit. Also in the post-exilic literature of the Hebrews,

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4 - Bono, Textbook of Wisdom, p. 16, 18.

5 - See Leonard Swidler, "A Christian Historical Perspective on Wisdom as a Basis for Dialogue with Judaism and Chinese Religion" Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Vol. 33, 1996, Number 4, pp. 557, 559.

wisdom was personified as a protecting mother and nursing wife whose house was the vestibule of death.<sup>6</sup>

Since every culture and civilisation has produced its own particular form of wisdom, understanding the term through its historical appearances would necessitate a complex process of cross-referencing. One cannot give the exact meaning of wisdom in a single term or sentence. In general 'wisdom' is understood as the way of dealing with practical knowledge, ethical virtue and intellectual ability that leads one to understand the meaning of life as a whole.

However, in Western civilisation wisdom is generally understood as a theoretical base for practical knowledge of a good life. In the Greek classical period Socrates (c. 470-399 B.C.), Plato (c. 428-348 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) defined the concept of wisdom in a more theoretical and philosophical perspective. Yet, Aristotle distinguished between speculative and practical wisdom. While practical wisdom relates to the conduct of life as moral behaviour, theoretical or speculative wisdom is best exemplified by the highest speculative science known as 'theology'. In his book entitled "*Nicomachean Ethics*" it is stated; "Let it be assumed that the states by virtue of which the soul possesses truth by way of affirmation or denial are five in number; art, knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophical wisdom, comprehension..."<sup>7</sup>

Following this philosophers of the Hellenistic period (approximately between the second century B.C. and the fourth century A.D.) perceived wisdom to be the combination of both practical and theoretical knowledge.<sup>8</sup> For this reason in that period philosophers considered mostly practical ethical problems rather than engaging in cosmological and theological discussions.

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6 - Dictionary of Biblical Theology, Xavier Léon-Dufour, p. 578.

7 - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 6. 3. 1139b 16; Cited in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, by Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2, p. 1792.

8 - See Leonard Swidler, "A Christian Historical Perspective on Wisdom as a Basis for Dialogue with Judaism and Chinese Religion" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 33, 1996, Number 4, p. 558.



However, in both Eastern and Western cultures wisdom is often connected with the Divine knowledge revealed through scriptures and Prophets. For instance Thomas Aquinas (1225-1275) stressed that; “All wisdom is from the Lord God,...Wisdom is a divine possession, not a human one.”<sup>9</sup>

Although Hebrew wisdom (*ḥokmah*) is literally defined as ‘skill’, and ‘ability’,<sup>10</sup> in Christianity wisdom was recognised as one of the manifestations of the Divine Nature in Jesus Christ and used as a title of the second person (Jesus) of the Trinity (the wisdom of the Father).<sup>11</sup> The Qur’ān defines wisdom (*ḥikma*) as ‘perfect’ or ‘high knowledge’, (*al-ḥikma al-bāligha*).<sup>12</sup>

When asked for definition of wisdom, Confucius said; Devotion to One’s duties as a subject, and respect for the spirits while keeping them at a distance, may be called wisdom.<sup>13</sup>

Spinoza (1632-1677) explained the concept of wisdom as intuitive (non inferential) knowledge, where one sees the universal in all the particulars of existence; and interpreted wisdom as living under the aspect of eternity. In the nineteenth century the Russian orthodox mystic philosophers Sergei N. Bulgakov<sup>14</sup> (1871-1944) and

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9 - Aquinas, Saint Thomas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, by Anton C. Pegis, F. R. S. C., p. 209.

10 - *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 393.

11 - *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Edited by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, vol. 20, p. 422.

12 - *The Qur’ān*, 54: 5.

13 - *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths*, Edited by R. C. Zaehner, p. 363.

14 - Russian economist, philosopher, and orthodox theologian, born in 1871 in Livny, Central Russia to a Russian Orthodox family. His father was a priest. He attended the law school of the University of Moscow. His master’s thesis on the relationship of capitalism and agriculture was published in 1900. (See *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Macmillan, New York- 1986).



Vladimir Soloviev<sup>15</sup> (1853-1900) distinguished between created and uncreated Wisdom.<sup>16</sup>

## 2- The main characteristics of a wise person:

A description of wisdom is best considered by examining the characteristics of a wise person. If we can answer the question "What does it mean to be wise" we can clarify the definition of wisdom. Let us compare the wise person with ordinary people and see the differences between their attributes.

-A wise person knows him/herself, yet he/she is not self-righteous.

-He/she sees life in proportion and therefore does not waste time on trivialities.

-He/she recognises that there are situations in which he/she cannot help others directly but he/she is always at the disposal of those who need him/her.

-Because he/she is not self-centred he/she is more able to discern the trend of events in both Religion and State, than those who are concerned with their own safety and gain.

-He/she finds life more than tolerable because he/she believes that God's might is most often expressed in deeds of mercy.<sup>17</sup>

In short, a wise person will order his/her life according to the universal divine laws and the fundamental nature of reality. Therefore one who is wise may be described as knowledgeable, skilful, intelligent, imaginative. One who has many virtues and good character.

## 3- Wisdom and religion:

Although wisdom appealed for its authority to the evidence of experience and the result of verifiable observation, it often appeared to be a-religious in its approach to

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15 - Russian theologian, philosopher and poet, born in Moscow. His main concern was to demonstrate rationally the truth of Christianity and he tried to give the scientific interpretation of religious philosophy. (See, The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Macmillan, New York- 1986).

16 - An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Mysticism and Mystery Religions, by John Ferguson, p. 210.

17 - A Dictionary of Christian Ethics, Edited by John Macquarrie, p. 360.

life.<sup>18</sup> The central core of wisdom in religion consists of reflection on the existence of the cosmos and Divine revelation. It is through such an application that a wise person becomes a person who orders his/her life according to both Divine revelation and the fundamental nature of reality which are the two different emanations of God.

Although in some civilisations the concept of wisdom was originally concerned with worldly issues, later it became theologised and gained a philosophical character.<sup>19</sup> The main reason behind this reorientation towards the divine transcendent is that human beings from any era have always displayed a desire to learn about the workings of the universe and what is good for humankind. In this way wisdom was recognised as a way of thinking and an attitude formed through experience, reasoning and morality.<sup>20</sup>

According to the Qur'ān wisdom (*ḥikma*) was granted to all of the Prophets after Abraham including David, Jesus, Muḥammad, and Luqmān<sup>21</sup> and linked with the idea of purity (*ṣafā*). The Qur'ān also uses the word wisdom (*ḥikma*) for a source of guidance that accompanies the book (*kitāb*) of God. In one of these passages we read that: "He (God) it is who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His Verses, purifying them, and teaching them the book and *al-ḥikma* (wisdom),..."<sup>22</sup> According to the majority of Muslim scholars', the 'book' (*kitāb*) here is the general divine knowledge but wisdom

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18 - Clements, *Wisdom in Theology*, p. 21.

19 - *Dictionary of Belief and Religion*, Edited by Rosemary Goring, p. 563.

20 - *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, By Keter Publishing House Ltd., vol. 16, p. 558.

21 - Luqmān was one of the wise men in Israel. Some scholars are of the opinion that he was not an apostle. According to the tradition, he was a contemporary of David and lived in Abyssinia or the Sudan. His teachings contain religious, moral and social guidance. (See "Who is who in the Qur'ān", by Muḥammad Saeed Siddīqi, p. 121, Kazi Publication, Lahore-Pakistan-1994).

22 - The Qur'ān, 62: 2.



*(hikma)* is the practical application of this general knowledge which was recognised as Sunna<sup>23</sup>.

In the Bible it is indicated that by the use of wisdom human beings may understand the limitation of their knowledge and devote themselves to an understanding of Divine communication. Alongside this, human beings day to day existential experience leads to a realisation of the holiness and imminent power of almighty God. Therefore to fear God is the beginning of wisdom.<sup>24</sup>

Living in the universe can lead one to a recognition of the Divine presence in the created order. Wisdom, which is one of the Divine attributes, can be discovered in the same way. It is manifested in both cosmic laws and Divine Revelation. In other words, God created both the universe and divine laws which were sent down according to His own immutable nature. Regarding this point a religious and wise man/woman can be described as a person who has knowledge of both this world and the Divine world. However, as I have already indicated, the person who possesses such wisdom is not selfish but is on the contrary duty bound to share this special knowledge with others, by inviting them to order their lives according to these two worlds.

As human thought progressed wisdom came to be categorised into two dimensions, human and divine. Divine wisdom is something which is utterly distinct from the primordial conscious state of the human being. For instance, in Islam wisdom has frequently been understood as a kind of practical knowledge. As a result two sources, intellect and revelation, have been identified as the foundation upon which metaphysics can be established as the fruitful culmination of such thought processes.<sup>25</sup>

In addition religious understanding came to identify wisdom as an attribute of God, which was identified with Divine Revelation. For instance, in the Gilgamesh

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23 - Normative custom of the Prophet. It is the second important source of Islam, after the Qur'ān.

24 - The Bible, Proverbs, 9: 10.

25 - Nasr, *The Need for a Sacred Science*, p. 12.



Epic<sup>26</sup>, the hero went in search of the secret of immortality and learned that only gods are immortal. In a Sumerian poem "Man and his God" an upright man who suffers has no recourse but to pray for deliverance. Although, in the Jewish post-exilic period, wisdom was identified with knowledge of the Torah and law, in Christianity wisdom was identified with Jesus Christ as the wisdom of the Father.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4- Wisdom and philosophy:

Although in some respects the aim of philosophy and wisdom are the same and are closely allied, they adopt different methods to achieve their aims. In a sense these methodological differences can be seen to be an extension of a more fundamental split between the two. The main difference between philosophy and wisdom is that while wisdom is originally a practical way of life and insight with the purpose of living out daily life, philosophy is more theoretical and systematic thinking about the world and human nature.

Whilst wisdom uses ready premises as the foundation of its practical world view without criticising, philosophy wants to reach its own premises by a speculative method. For example, wisdom started by accepting the existence of God and sought to explain the world in terms of God, but philosophy starts with the natural environment and seeks to find room for God. The other important thing is that while philosophy is popular only among the intellectual or educated class, wisdom generally appeals to all people who have an interest in the meaning of life and religion.

However, in terms of the historical progression of thought, philosophy and wisdom have gone through almost the same processes of development. In this connection philosophy was only a systematised version of the wisdom tradition. For instance, in the etymological definition of wisdom it can be seen that philosophy means "love of wisdom". The term 'philosophy' in the above meaning was used for the first time by Pythagoras (c. 580-497 B.C.). The interesting thing is that Pythagoras was a well

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26 - One of the most important literary compositions in the Akkadian language; it relates the story of the Mesopotamian hero Gilgamesh who did not want to die. (See Encyclopaedia Britannic).

27 - The Oxford English Dictionary, Edited by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, vol. 20, p. 421.

known wise master and his explanation was based more on sagacity than scientific or pure philosophy. He noted that men could be divided three types : those who loved pleasure, those who loved activity, and those who loved wisdom.<sup>28</sup>

One can see this new understanding in the thinking of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the Sophists<sup>29</sup>, who used the concept of wisdom as a kind of practical application of philosophy. Aristotle, for instance, distinguished between the practical wisdom of everyday life and speculative wisdom (*sophia*) as a kind of systematic wisdom, or philosophy. For this reason some contemporary writers such as Fritz Mauthner have tried to distinguish philosophy from wisdom; "...such persons (wise) act according to their judgements. Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was certainly a philosopher but hardly a wise man. Montaigne (1533-1592) was a wise man but not really a philosopher. We think of Socrates as being both wise and a philosopher."<sup>30</sup>

It is true that wisdom is a kind of native sagacity and practical way of life. It does not concern itself with the strict and systematic thinking employed by philosophy. However, wisdom involves also an intellectual grasp in many areas of human life such as religion, science and other daily social aspects of the community.

Although wisdom has a wide range of meanings in different contexts, the best way of understanding this concept will mean engaging in a theoretical study of the development of the history of human thought and focusing on that inner dimension of practical wisdom which can be found in the different wisdom literature of the world and the ethical way of life to which it points.

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28 -Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion, William L. Reese, p. 431.

29 - The word come to be applied in the fifth century B.C. in the technical sense given a number of Greek individuals who had neither a common set of doctrines nor any shared organisation.

30 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 394.



## B- PHILOSOPHY

### 1- Definition:

Many definitions of philosophy begin by answering the question of “What the word ‘philosophy’ means”. The word ‘philosophy’ was first used by the Greeks to mean ‘wisdom’. It is a compound word which consists from ‘*philo*’ and ‘*sophia*’. ‘*philo*’ means ‘love’, ‘*sophia*’ means ‘wisdom’. Both of them together mean the “love of wisdom”. According to Heracleides Ponticus (a disciple of Plato), it was Pythagoras who first called himself a *philosophos* (lover of wisdom). Once Pythagoras was asked; ‘what are you?’ and he replied that “I am a philosopher (*philosophos*)” since he believed that only God knows everything and He is wise but humans are not able to be wise. Therefore humans should be “lovers of wisdom”.<sup>31</sup>

Philosophy is a method of investigating and an effort to acquire wisdom by intellect. According to Alfred Weber (1868-1958) philosophy is a general investigation and a method of explanation about nature. From another point of view, philosophy is the science of science and it is a reflection of knowledge gained by common experience. In other words philosophy organises all knowledge and sciences in a systematic framework. Therefore, philosophy proposes a methodology of science that helps the development of the sciences.<sup>32</sup> Yet, philosophical studies represent a reflection which helps thinkers to check their common sense observation over and over again.

However, unlike other sciences, philosophy has no particular subject to investigate. It may be for this reason Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)<sup>33</sup> advised his student, “You

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31 - Ibid., vol. 5 & 6, p. 216.

32 - The Dictionary of Philosophy, Dagobert D. Runes, p. 234.

33 - Kant was a German philosopher who labelled his own position ‘transcendental’ or ‘critical’ idealism. He was born and died in Königsberg. He studied and taught astronomy and theology. Kant’s personal life was that of a methodical pedant, touched with piety and rigidity. In 1770 he obtained the chair of logic and metaphysics at the university of Königsberg. His most important works are the three critiques: ‘Critique of Pure Reason’, ‘Critique of Practical Reason’ and ‘Critique of Judgement’.



will not learn from me philosophy, but how to philosophise, not thoughts to repeat, but how to think. Think for yourself, inquire for yourself, stand on your own feet.”<sup>34</sup> There is an agreement that “Philosophy is not a subject of study, but a way of studying all subjects.”<sup>35</sup>

The other important thing is that in philosophy, questions are more important than answers because the subject matter of philosophy is not an experiential and particular field rather it is a universal knowledge which tends to embrace the whole of existence. For instance, in philosophy there are some antinomies which cannot be solved properly because humans have no experience about such questions. For example “Does God exist? What is the meaning of life? Why does the universe exist?” Above all, philosophical problems cannot be answered by sense experience and everyday events, because they are universal questions which come from a human’s own reflection and relationship with nature.

The other kind of questions was about the conceptual value of knowledge, and truth, such as “What is scientific knowledge?” or “How do I know that the resulting scientific claim is true?” Answering the above questions could be a path towards an understanding of philosophy and philosophers.

Consequently, philosophy is not a simple thinking; on the contrary it is a deep and serious effort to derive an understanding of nature and humanity itself. In other words philosophy is a method of thinking rather than a system of belief or ideology.

A philosopher is a person who is concerned about humanity’s position in this world and who therefore has an impact on the history of thought both through their practical life and ideas. We need philosophy on the one hand to learn fundamental questions about the meaning of our existence, and secondly studying philosophy can teach us to think systematically.

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34 - Quoted from Great Philosophers of West, by E. W. F. Tomlin, p. 197.

35 - Hawton, Philosophy for Pleasure, p. vii.

## 2- Divisions:

There are different classifications for the branches of philosophy. In general, philosophy was divided into two main branches; epistemology (theory of knowledge) and ontology or metaphysics (the science of existence). It is more generally accepted that the various branches of philosophy include: metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, logic and aesthetics. The following is a brief description of these main disciplines of philosophy.

a- **Metaphysics:** Although metaphysics, as the main body of philosophy, includes both ontology (the science of existence) and epistemology (theory of knowledge), yet the majority of philosophers used it more often instead of ontology. Metaphysics as a philosophical term was given for the first time as the title for Aristotle's "First philosophy"<sup>36</sup> by Andronicus of Rhodes (First century B.C.).<sup>37</sup> He put forward the title of the 'first philosophy' after the title of 'physics' then it was called 'metaphysics', "after the physics" (*meta ta physica*).<sup>38</sup>

Therefore one of the main subjects of philosophy is the "first principles" or "first philosophy" (theology) which is the foundation of all philosophical investigations such as the problem of creation and the problem of "the first matter of all existence" (*arche*).<sup>39</sup> In addition to this, metaphysics also investigates humanity's own problems such as mind and body, free will, and community.

b- **Ethics:** Ethics is an effort to find the fundamental principles and concepts of human activities. At the same time ethics represents judgements that concern our approval and disapproval of actions as either good or bad. Ethics has two kinds of

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36 - The subject of theological knowledge that gives the answer to the question of God's existence and the beginning of creation.

37 - He was one of the editors of Aristotle.

38 - The Dictionary of Philosophy, Dagobert D. Runes, p. 196.

39 - An Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by C.H.R. Parkinson, p. 254.



judgement: Judgement of value such as good and evil, judgement of obligation such as rightness and erroneous behaviour.<sup>40</sup>

However the subject of ethics in philosophy is particularly important and also very difficult because humanity has to know itself. In other words on this subject the philosopher is a subject and at the same time an object for his/her ethical studies.

There are some ethical theories which ask what is the correct conduct for human beings. For example, Plato's answer to this question was that finding the correct and good life is an intellectual task, that it is very similar to the discovery of mathematical truths. Aristotle suggested that if we reach the golden middle way and act accordingly by intelligence we can limit our desire and pleasure. This golden middle way then make us happy in our life.

In short, ethics is concerned basically with fundamental analysis such as what it is to be good or bad and right or wrong. The other important thing about ethical investigations in philosophy is that ethics is a kind of normative science which uses orders as 'ought' or 'will' and it is the science of the determination of value.

c- Epistemology: Epistemology is the theory of the possibility of knowledge which seeks to understand what can be known and how it can be known. On the other hand, epistemology or the theory of knowledge is an attempt to investigate how we can reliably judge the truth or falsity of our knowledge.

In philosophy there are three main epistemological theories: Dogmatism, scepticism and criticism. Historically the first sophists (ancient sceptic philosophers) started to criticise the value of knowledge. They did not believe that we can find the absolute truth whilst at the opposite end of the spectrum, dogmatic thinkers believe that if we think according to our intellect we can reach true knowledge. However, the first systematic critique on dogmatic epistemology was carried out by Kant (1724-1804). He claimed that we can grasp the phenomenal dimension of this world through our limited intellectual capacity, but we can not grasp the nature of the nominal world that lies behind the appearance world.

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40 - The Dictionary of Philosophy, Dagobert D. Runes, p. 98.



Another important problem in the theory of knowledge is this: 'Where does our knowledge come from?' 'Does it come from experiences or intellect?' According to rationalist theories, our knowledge comes from our thought process. For instance, Socrates (c. 470-399 B.C.) claimed that we do not learn anything, we only remember which we have already learned in the Divine World before we enter this world. In other words, the knowledge of forms or universals is already in our minds.

Against these dogmatic ideas empirical philosophers claimed that all types of knowledge are derived from experience. For example, according to the English empiricist philosopher J. Locke<sup>41</sup> (1632-1704), before experience or education our mind is like an unemployed blackboard, that we learn everything through our senses and our experiences.

d- Aesthetics: For the first time in the history of philosophy Plato and his disciple Aristotle analysed deeply the concept of 'beauty' and 'beautiful'. However, the word 'aesthetics' in its present sense was used for the first time by Baumgarten<sup>42</sup> (1714-1762) and then the German idealist philosopher Hegel<sup>43</sup> (1770-1831) established the science of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline.<sup>44</sup> Aesthetics or the philosophy of art investigates the meaning of the concept of

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41 - The most influential English empiricist and political philosopher whose thought became the foundation both for classical British empiricism and for liberal democracy. His two important philosophical works were "The Essay Concerning Human Understanding" and "Two Treatises of Government".

42 - German philosopher and aesthetician, who was born in Berlin, the son of great theologian and pedagogue, Aust Hermann Franke.

43 - Hegel, George Wilhelm Friedriche, he was born in Stuttgart in 1770 and died in Berlin in 1831. He studied philosophy and classics at Tübingen and went to Jena as teacher in philosophy in 1801. In 1818 he accepted a professorship of philosophy at Heidelberg, from which position he was called two years later to succeed Fichte at the University of Berlin. He studied in this university until his death in 1831. His important written works are the 'Phenomenology of Mind', and the 'Philosophy and Right'.

44 - The Dictionary of Philosophy, Dagobert D. Runes, p. 6.

'beauty' and 'beautiful'. Although in art, 'beauty' depends on an individual's own taste or subjective opinion, philosophers want to discover the fundamental reason behind the rules and value of art.

e- Logic: Logic is the study of the formal principles of knowledge, but it can also be seen as an introduction to philosophy. From this point of view, logic is the most fundamental branch of philosophy because it is a method of proof and demonstration.

Logic does not investigate any particular phenomena or subject matter; rather it is a tool to use in all studies, for it attempts to show what is true and what is wrong. At the same time logic is an art that helps us to argue systematically and it establishes the general principles for all sciences and studies.

Logic has two branches, one of them Formal Logic, which was established by Aristotle, the other is Modern or Symbolic Logic which was found in the nineteenth century by Frege<sup>45</sup> (1848-1925), Giuseppe Peano<sup>46</sup> (1858-1932), Bertrand Russell<sup>47</sup> (1872-1970) and David Hilbert<sup>48</sup> (1862-1943). This logic was used as a formal method to reach a symbolic language which would soon be used to establish all kinds of electronic machines.

In addition to the above five main branches of philosophy there are other philosophical branches such as the following: Philosophy of science, philosophy of

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45 - German mathematician and philosopher and the founder of modern mathematical logic. He also found the modern discipline of philosophy of logic.

46 - Italian mathematician and logician, who was a professor of mathematics at the university of Turin from 1890 to 1932. Peano was an important influence on Russell, and gave him idea of deriving mathematics from logic.

47 - British philosopher, mathematician and social reformer, who was born in Trelleck, Wales, in 1872. He studied mathematics and philosophy at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, and became a lecturer in philosophy 1910-1916. From his long list of works the following are philosophically important: "The Principles of Mathematics", "The Problem of Philosophy" and "The Analysis of Mind".

48 - German mathematician, who was born in Konigsberg. He and his followers pioneered the use of formal axioms both for logical reasoning and to define classes of mathematical structures.



religion, philosophy of history, philosophy of education, philosophy of law, philosophy of language, philosophy of value, political philosophy and natural philosophy.

### 3- Philosophy and science:

Looking at the relationship between philosophy and the sciences will help us to understand the definition of philosophy and to answer such questions as “What is philosophy not?” is easier than to say “What philosophy is”. Thus, philosophy can be seen from both religious and scientific angles due to the closeness of the subject matter of these two areas to philosophy.

The other thing is that science has a selective character but philosophy, particularly metaphysics, is a supreme science which has defined and judged other fields of sciences. Let us first compare philosophy and sciences.

It is true that sometimes both philosophy and science judge the same hypotheses but each has its own principles and objectives for such judgement. Sciences are interested in phenomena and proof because of their experiential and quantitative nature while philosophy has a qualitative and subjective nature. Also the questions that philosophers can ask, such as “Does God exist?” “What is the meaning of life?” and “Why am I here?” are not normally asked by scientists.

Another difference between philosophy and science is that while sciences choose a special subject and use a particular method to investigate their own phenomena, philosophy analyses these scientific results deeply. However, a scientist's proof cannot be shown to be the absolute truth of the theory of science. Their theory is based only on one hypotheses, when there are many possible hypotheses. For this reason Karl Popper (1902-1984)<sup>49</sup> says that “In a way scientists can be said to spend much of their time trying to show that their own theories are false. When

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49 - Philosopher of natural and social science who studied and taught in his native Vienna until the threat of Nazi occupation. Then he was sent abroad. He became professor of logic and scientific method at the London School of Economics. His main philosophical works “The Logic of Scientific Discovery”, “The Open Society and Its Enemies”, “Objective Knowledge”, “Conjectures and Refutations”, and “The Poverty of Historicism”.



all the scientists' theories have been shown to be false except one then he or she can conclude, at least for the time being, that the remaining theory is the correct one. But no theory is safe for all time. Every theory is ultimately only a hypothesis, and hence permanently open to the possibility of refutation."<sup>50</sup>

However, philosophy and science can be understood from the standpoint of their own nature and problems. For example a historian will ask; How does the idea of freedom develop? But the philosopher will ask: what does freedom mean? A psychologist will ask; How can we investigate the nature of the soul? While the philosopher asks; What is the soul ?

Since philosophy wants to discover the essence of everything, the study of science is necessary for philosophy as the starting point of the debate. On the other hand, philosophy judges the conclusions of the sciences by its own general principles. Descartes (1596-1630) claimed that philosophy was like a tree, the roots of which are metaphysics and the trunks and branches of which are the various sciences. Thus, scientific progress equips philosophical study and philosophical critics help the progress of the sciences

#### 4- Philosophy and religion:

According to ancient Greek thought religion is a kind of fear which is mixed with expectation. The word 'religion' came into the English language from the Latin word '*religio*' which refers to the outward expression of belief.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, the term 'religion' clearly refers to certain characteristic types of data (beliefs, practices, feelings, moods, expectations, attitudes, etc.).<sup>52</sup> In Islam the meaning of religion is derived from the Arabic word '*dīn*' which means to believe and obey.<sup>53</sup>

To a large extent both religion and philosophy investigate the same supreme questions such as "Does God exist?" "What kind of belief is it to believe in God?"

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50 - Tichman, Jenny, and Katherine Evans, *Philosophy: A Beginners Guide*, p. 164.

51 - *The New Bible Dictionary*, Inter-Varsity Press, p. 1083.

52 - *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edited by James Hastings, and T. Clark vol. 10, p. 662.

53 - *Jawhārī, Al-Şihāḥ*, by Ismā'īl b. Ḥammād, vol. 5, p. 2118.

“Where did the universe come from?” “What was the first cause?” and “Was God present before time began?” To answer these kind of question philosophy uses the intellect and sometimes utilises human experience by various methods, but the starting point of religion comes from divine revelation or inspiration. However, in religions, prophets and religious people use reason to help explain the practical usage of religion, and provide a ground for their belief system.

Nevertheless, the different problems that philosophy and religion address are not independent from each other, one represents supreme thought, while the other is the supreme interest of life. Within this relationship there developed a new philosophical branch which was termed as “Philosophy of Religion”. Briefly, this branch of philosophy investigates religion from the philosophical point of view. At the same time philosophy shares with religion the investigation of the first cause of everything through use of the theological method. Theology is the science of God or the first cause. This is the ground from which philosophy judges religion.

### Conclusion:

In the sixth century B.C. the Greek wisdom understanding changed due to the free inquiry atmosphere at that time and took on a more speculative and theoretical form. As a result of this rationalistic tendency Greek thinkers started to believe that the ultimate nature of reality could be grasped by reason, without divine guidance. This meant that the human has the capability to find out the real meaning behind the apparent world, without divine wisdom. This could be regarded as a starting point for humanism. As a result of this development, wisdom gradually gained a philosophical character and created its own independent premises by staying on the ground of reason alone.

Although in Greek culture philosophy became free from religion, in other civilisations philosophy, religion and wisdom understanding co-existed in the same atmosphere. For instance, in Eastern cultures, which include Islamic culture, it became difficult to separate one of these from the others. In other words, for a historian of human thought it is not easy to distinguish within a culture what is philosophical, what is wisdom and religious belief.



## CHAPTER II

# PRE-ISLAMIC WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY

## I- PRE-ISLAMIC WISDOM LITERATURE

### Introduction

Among the numerous definitions of wisdom, which were given in previous chapter, we can find the following general meanings: the capacity of judging rightly, the ability to think and act, direct experience, and also living in harmony with nature, community and the Divine World. In classical Islamic writing, wisdom (*ḥikma*) was defined by use of similar expressions; knowledge, the understanding of the Qur'ān and Sunna, practical usage of knowledge, insight, and the enabling of one to speak and act in the right way.<sup>54</sup>

The term wisdom literature is used for the first time by those Old Testament scholars to criticise specifically of the three canonical book, Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.<sup>55</sup>

From the most primitive of tribes to the most brilliant and enlightened wisdom literature, one can observe the presence and importance of proverbs and maxims shared through religion and daily experiences. Most of these were concerned primarily with the meaning, order and security of human life.<sup>56</sup> At different times and in different places in the world, wisdom has been associated with such disparate spheres and concepts as philosophy, science, sage sayings, the ultimate hidden cause, the inner meaning of existence, revelation, and human and animal behaviour.

In the Pre-Islamic period wisdom literature could be found in many ancient civilisations in the universal form of terse or sententious sayings both in oral and written form. Oral sayings were particularly prevalent in the wisdom tradition of the North American Indians, Australians, Arabs and West Africans. Among these

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54 - Hilālī, Interpretation of Nobel Qur'ān, p. 69.

55 - Wood, Wisdom Literature, p. 3.

56 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 397.



oral wisdom traditions, the most interesting is perhaps that of the Semitic wisdom of the pre-Islamic Arabs, due to their independent evolution. They developed sayings in poetic form in which the subject was human life and its moral dimensions, such as friendship, neighbourliness, hospitality and love of the natural environment. In these oral poetic sayings, there can be found in particular quite amazing descriptions of how to conduct human interaction virtuously.<sup>57</sup>

Besides this oral form of wisdom, the other ancient civilisations such as those of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Babylonian, Indian, Greek, Israelite, Persian, and Chinese possessed wisdom literature which is recognised as extremely influential because of the quality of the content of their instructions in the literary form.

The historic expansion of Islam soon brought the Muslim populace into contact with well established foreign wisdom literature. Inevitably Islamic thought became influenced in both direct and indirect ways. Furthermore it must be remembered that many of the sages and wise men who converted to Islam brought with them a great deal of religious thought and terminology which were a part of their previous conceptual frameworks evolving from their own indigenous religious traditions.

Thus within the now flourishing geo-political Islamic environment, many aspects of the above wisdom literature mixed with the Islamic understanding. Once we acknowledge this historical phenomena, it becomes obvious that in conjunction to studying the primary sources of the Qur'ān and traditions, one should also take account of the influence of the pre-Islamic wisdom Literature, the third pillar affecting Islamic writing on the topic of wisdom.

### 1- Mesopotamian Wisdom:

The Mesopotamian wisdom writings originated with the Sumerian<sup>58</sup> as a kind of simple listing of objects around the third millennium. This kind of wisdom is called 'list wisdom' and constitutes the initial historical step towards scientific study. In

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57 - Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Edited by James Hasting, vol. 12 , p. 742.

58 - They for the first of ancient peoples to evolve a system of writing. They invented the system of inscribing marks or symbols on clay tablets.

this list the language was used as the means of 'inventorying', in order to detail 'value wisdom'. However this kind of wisdom understanding later on provided the base for the social and moral wisdom texts, which were made as the foundation of the cosmos and justice systems due to the effect of this kind of value wisdom.<sup>59</sup>

Beside Sumerians' wisdom Akkadian and Babylonian wisdom also counted among the Mesopotamian wisdom. The main subject matter of the Babylonian Theodicy<sup>60</sup> is found in the debate between a suffering man and his friend. It is believed that their roles and the views expressed correspond broadly to those of "Job and His Friends". In Babylonian tradition wisdom literature also contained proverbial wisdom. This was the basis of a more conscious reflection, a method by which one orders human life. Also in the Babylonian scripts, appropriate rewards or punishments were expected in both the present life and also the afterlife as an expression of Divine justice. Corresponding to this form of instruction were the "Counsels of Wisdom", the "Counsels of Pessimist", the "Advice to a Prince", and "Teachings of Ahiqar". However, in these wisdom writings the main issues were death and the good man's suffering.<sup>61</sup>

## 2- Egypt:

The starting point of Egyptian wisdom was the sagacious sayings, counsels or advice. This sayings aimed at providing instruction on how to make a success of life.<sup>62</sup> These were transmitted through one of three modes, the patriarchal family structure, sages or the old kings. The recipients were the younger generation, with the wisdom intended to assist them through its adaptation into a guide of social conduct as this related to nature and society. Characteristic documents of the

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59 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 396.

60 - The defence and vindication of God. Also it is defined as omnipotent and good in the light of evil in these world.

61 - Encyclopaedia of Judaica, by Keter Publishing House Ltd., vol. 16 p. 559.

62 - Wood, Wisdom Literature, p. 25.



Egyptians were the 'instructions' such as those of "Ptah-Hotep"<sup>63</sup>, 'Ani'<sup>64</sup>, and "Amen-Em-Opet"<sup>65</sup>. In such literature, sages developed the concept of a cosmic order. The title 'instruction' is the Egyptian equivalent of wisdom and it takes the form of instructions for a royal official.<sup>66</sup>

It has been mentioned that in ancient Egypt the early wisdom literature was pragmatic and supplied basic rules which were based on tradition and experience, and that only in its later stage did it gain a religious character. Perhaps for this reason they shared in common with the revealed religions the concept of a judgement in the afterlife which would act as a kind of compensatory for the injustices of the worldly life.

However, the main concepts of Egyptian wisdom were truth, justice, and order in the cosmos and society. The representative of this cosmic order was the goddess Maat or Mayet<sup>67</sup> who was a daughter of Re. Egyptian wise men were also renowned for their dream interpretation and practice of the magical arts, skills which elevated them into the service of the Pharaohs<sup>68</sup> in the capacity of advisers.<sup>69</sup>

The oldest counsels or instructions in Egypt are found as far back as 2800 B.C. Without names such as the "Instruction of Im-Hotep" and the "Instruction of Djedefor", we know little about them. The "Instruction of Ptah-Hotep" is the oldest

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63 - This is attributed to the vizier of King Izezi (2450 B.C.).

64 - Ani instructs his son to follow the ideal of the quiet, self-controlled man. A probable date for the text is about 1000 B.C. It also contains some religious elements in it.

65 - The original may have been composed about 1300 B.C., and was in popular demand for many centuries. The teaching is a higher moral and religious level than most of the earlier Egyptian wisdom.

66 - Wood, *Wisdom Literature*, p. 27.

67 - In Ancient Egypt, the concept of the divine order of things established in the act of creation. It is the basis of the law and of all ethical instruction and wisdom. Daughter of the sun god Re.

68 - The title applied to the god-kingdom of Ancient Egyptian from the New Kingdom (c. 1500 B. C.) onwards. It was the basis of the law and of all ethical instruction and wisdom.

69 - The Bible, Isaiah, 19: 11, 12.

surviving Egyptian document, it includes the concepts of modesty, uprightness, self-control, subordination, and silence as the virtues of the wise. Most of the remaining instructions came from the Middle Kingdom between 2135 and 1660 B. C.

One of the most remarkable pieces of literature of this period was the "Instruction for Merika-Re". It mentioned for the first time the judgement of the death. The "Instruction of Amen-Em-Opet" which is strongly pietistic, calls for humility towards the hidden rule of the sun god. The Instruction from King Amen-Em-Opet to his son Sesostri, contains in it a remarkable parallel to Proverbs, 22: 17-24: 22, and probably acted as a model for Proverbs.<sup>70</sup>

The other influential teaching, the "Instruction of Ani", belonged to the period of the New Kingdom, between 1570 and 1085 B.C. This defended the traditional structure of authority from criticisms made by those in the New Kingdom. However, the main characteristic of the late Egyptian wisdom literature was that almost all instructions focused on the realisation of human knowledge and the freedom of divinity. Therefore, in the late period, wisdom and piety came to be more closely related, and wisdom consisted of the knowledge of God and His free will. These themes also become prominent in the biblical tradition and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Egyptian writings exerted some form of influence on the development of Hebrew understanding.<sup>71</sup>

Other works of Egyptian wisdom are the "Divine Attributes of Pharaoh", the "Song of the Harper", the "Eloquent Peasant", and the "Dispute over Suicide". As with the book of Job, the last two touch on the subject of an innocent sufferer's cry for justice and the dubious value of a sufferer's life.

### 3- Wisdom in Old and New Testaments:

In the Hebrew language, the etymological root of "wisdom" (*hokmah*) relates to the skill of a craftsman with which a responsibility is fulfilled.<sup>72</sup> In other words wisdom

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70 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 396.

71 - Ibid., vol. 15, p. 396.

72 - Dictionary of Bible, John L. McKenzie, S. J., p. 930.



(*hokmah*) signifies the possession of a particular skill, such as that exhibited by the goldsmith, stonemason, or shipbuilder.<sup>73</sup> However in the Biblical conceptual framework wisdom is represented as a special mediator power emanating from the Creator which operates between God and His creation.<sup>74</sup> The '*hokham*' is the knowledgeable man, the same as the counsellor and teacher. In the eyes of these *hokhams*, wisdom is the highest virtue which leads the people to ethical awareness and religious understanding through the formula of living in harmony with both God and ones fellow humans.<sup>75</sup> Thus Jesus' twofold reply in the New Testament as to which is the greatest commandment; "The first is, 'hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength'. The second is this, 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself'. There is no other commandment greater than these".<sup>76</sup>

The Hebrew concept of wisdom comprised two main categories: firstly the sphere of ethics, pertaining to everyday life. Secondly that dimension concerned with faith in the transcendent God. However, these two strands were eventually united under one totalising system by the priestly (rabbinical) class, the motivating force being a zealous preoccupation with strict observance of the Torah. As a result of this understanding in the post-exilic period, wisdom was identified with knowledge of the Torah (Divine Law).<sup>77</sup>

The Old Testament contains many instances in which human wisdom is condemned as an impoverished phenomenon when used for self surveying ends, thus, "How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us'? But behold the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. The wise men shall be put to shame,

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73 - Blenkinsop, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*, p. 5.

74 - *A Dictionary of The Sacred Language of all Scriptures and Myths*, by G. A. Gaskell, p. 365.

75 - *Encyclopaedia of Judaica*, By Keter Publishing House Ltd., vol. 16, p. 558.

76 - *The Bible*, Mark, 12: 29-31.

77 - *The Blackwell Dictionary of Judaica*, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, p. 575.

they shall be dismayed and taken; *lo*, they have rejected the words of the Lord and what wisdom is in them?”<sup>78</sup>

Historically, one of the great crises in the early history of Israel came with the establishment of the monarchical system and the question of how the entire apparatus of state control should be implemented within the prophetic community. How were the needs of a centralised administration to be reconciled with the historical concern for the centrality of wisdom. The newly established class of civil administrators and representatives needed to be socialised into the dominant political practice of the surrounding Near Eastern empires. To this end much of the instructional and aphoristic material of the Egyptian wisdom tradition were utilised. It was left to the Jewish scribes to find a balance between this newly encountered Egyptian wisdom literature, and their own national experiential wisdom tradition.<sup>79</sup>

Biblical criticism in the nineteenth century revealed that the Old Testament wisdom books were not simply the exclusive product of the native Israelite genius but were, rather, very much a product of the prevalent ancient Near East literary context. Particularly influential were the traditions of the Egyptian and Babylonian wisdom literature. Amongst those books bearing the stamp of these two cultural ‘superpowers’, three books stand out particularly, and are almost universally included in this category: Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. In addition, Sirac and the Wisdom of Solomon, should also come under this category. Many contemporary scholars now think that these books may have been written through a combination of wisdom literature and traditional Yahweism,<sup>80</sup> Even Erman and others showed that a section of the book of Proverbs was based directly on an Egyptian work, the “*Instruction of Amen-Em-Opet*”. Ben Sirac, who was a scribe and master of a

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78 - The Bible, Jeremiah, 8: 8.

79 - Bilenkinsop, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*, p. 6.

80 - The Oxford Companion to the Bible, By Burce M. Metzger, Michael D. Coogan, p. 801.



'religious school' in the second century B.C. compiled the book of Ecclesiasticus,<sup>81</sup> in which the ancient wisdom literature tradition was combined with study of the laws and prophethood.<sup>82</sup>

For the Hellenistic Jews the fact of God's utter transcendence to, and separateness from, his creation, was a particular area of philosophical/theological concern. The most common response was to identity wisdom with the second Logos, with the first being God itself. "I, wisdom, dwell in prudence, and I find knowledge and insight."<sup>83</sup> For this reason 'wisdom' *'hokmah'* or 'word' in the Hellenistic age was seen as one of the most important attributes of God which was also present in the human. Thus in Ecclesiasticus we find wisdom described as the first of all created things. "I (Wisdom) have seen everything that is done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind."<sup>84</sup>

In common with many ancient civilisations, wisdom was personified as a female who gives instruction, being an ultimate gift of Yahweh.<sup>85</sup> Wisdom of Solomon indicates the personification of wisdom: "Like a fire mist she rises from the power of God, a pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty... She is the reflection of the everlasting light, the flawless mirror of the active power of God and the image of his goodness. She is but one, yet can do everything; herself unchanging, she makes all things new; age after age she enters into holy souls, and makes them God's friends and prophets. She is more radiant than the sun, and surpasses every constellation; compared with the light of day, she is found to

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81 - Part of the Old Testament Apocrypha writings, originally attributed to a Jewish scribe (c. 180- B.C.). This book latter was translated into Greek by scribe's Grandson; also called, the Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach or just Sirach or Ben Sira.

82 - A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation, Edited by R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, p. 727.

83 - The Bible, Proverbs, 8: 12.

84 - Ibid., Ecclesiastes, 1, 4.

85 - Ibid., Proverbs. 8: 1-21.

excel; for day gives place to night, but against wisdom no evil can prevail. She spans the world in power from end to end, and orders all things benignly.”<sup>86</sup>

Many scholars argue that this personification of wisdom is a symbolic motif commonly adopted for the other ancient Near Eastern goddesses. One example of this is the Egyptian goddess Maat or Mayet, protector of the king and his officials.

The Christian understanding followed that of the Old Testament, in seeing wisdom as a gift from God, and linked specifically to the Christian Revelation.<sup>87</sup> Wisdom is also identified (*hokmah*) with the ‘word’, manifested in the person of ‘Christ’, through whom all things were made.<sup>88</sup> Jesus’ deeds and teachings demonstrated to those around him his being possessed of wisdom. He is filled with wisdom from childhood onwards. “...and many who heard him were astonished, saying, ‘where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him?’.”<sup>89</sup>

According to the Bible belief in Christ empowers the believer with both the power and wisdom of God, because the Son is the wisdom and word of the Father.<sup>90</sup> The Christian theological framework also indicates that this personal wisdom had been hidden in God. In this way it is revealed in Jesus Christ.”<sup>91</sup>

The New Testament intimates that even as a young boy Jesus knowledge and ability to engage in discussion with religious elders aroused astonishment in his contemporaries, who wondered, “Where did he get this wisdom (*sophia*)”. In place of wisdom, Jesus used the term “good news” (*euangelion*). At that time, rabbis taught their teaching in the form of allegories, but Jesus preferred to use poetic metaphor. The essence of Jesus’ teaching can be summed up in the

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86 - An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Mysticism and Mystery Religions, Edited by John Ferguson, p. 120.

87 - Ibid., Colossians, 1: 28.

88 - Ibid., I John, 3.

89 - Ibid., Luke. 2: 40, 2: 52; Mark, 6: 2.

90 - Ibid., John, 1: 1.

91 - Dictionary of Biblical Theology, Edited by Xavier Léon-Dufour, p. 579.



following, "Love God and love your neighbour as yourself". However, Jesus also taught that communication with God and living according to His Divine Instruction can also lead to the salvation.<sup>92</sup>

The link between heavenly wisdom and ancient practical worldly wisdom finds historically recognised expression in the philosophical language of Philo (c. 30 B.C.- c. 40 A.D.). From this recognition scholastic Christian philosophers from the Middle Ages tended to use philosophy as a tool, to interpret Christianity through Aristotle's works. Basically philosophical inquiry came to be applied almost exclusively to the conceptual areas of revelation and knowledge of the Logos, which were the base of the Gnostic Christian tradition. Gnosticism arrived at an understanding of wisdom which viewed it as a type of knowledge which both reflected and emanated from God. Some elements of this Gnostic wisdom later on were taken by Muslim philosophers and mystics as a kind of inner dimension of Sufism.

#### 4- Indian:

Like other early wisdom literature, Indian wisdom is embodied in the collections of proverbs which were made for kings and other rulers. Among them, the well-known are Panchatantra or the Hitopadesa (Instruction in What is Beneficial). Also the Indian national epic, the Mahābbārata contains in its didactic sections, a good deal of ancient wisdom traditions. In this literature, wisdom gained its central position although it is difficult to distinguish this wisdom from philosophy and religion.<sup>93</sup>

In Hinduism, there are three major paths to attain the goal in life through wisdom; namely the Marga of knowledge (*jnana*), the Marga of works (*karma*), and the

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92 - See Leonard Swidler, "A Christian Historical Perspective on Wisdom as a Basis for Dialogue with Judaism and Chinese Religion" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 33, 1996, Number 4, p. 564.

93 - *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 399.

Marga of Devotion (*Bhakti*).<sup>94</sup> As in Hinduism, Buddhism also used the term 'way' which refers to the Gautama's fundamental truths that leads one to Nirvana, the goal of life. Buddhists after their master Gautama<sup>95</sup> (c. 563-483 B.C.), described his way as the Middle Way (*Majjhima Patipada in Pali*) between harsh asceticism and loose sensuality, which will lead to the goal of life.<sup>96</sup>

In Buddhism<sup>97</sup>, wisdom was also used as a method of gaining deliverance from the endless cycle of rebirths without religious exercises and mystical training. However, wisdom in its general meaning was used for the first time by Mahāyāna Buddhism<sup>98</sup> prescribing dialogues as the "perfection method" in about 100 B.C.<sup>99</sup> In these dialogues Buddha<sup>100</sup> spoke to some of his disciples and gave them canonical inspiration in a new teaching form which operated through the higher mind and upon the lower nature. For Buddha, right functioning means progressing on the path to perfection through truth, love, and action.

It is interesting to note that these Buddhist texts contain a number of striking parallels with some of the early Jewish wisdom literature. Similar to Jews

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94 - See Leonard Swidler, "A Christian Historical Perspective on Wisdom as a Basis for Dialogue with Judaism and Chinese Religion" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 33, 1996, Number 4, p. 559.

95 - Indian Philosopher, born in Bihar. The founder of Nyaya a classical systems of Hindu Philosophy. Nyaya Sutras are principally concerned with ways of knowing and of reaching valid logical conclusions. (See *Dictionary of Beliefs and Religion*, By Rosemary Goring, p. 188.)

96 - See Leonard Swidler, "A Christian Historical Perspective on Wisdom as a Basis for Dialogue with Judaism and Chinese Religion" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 33, 1996, Number 4, p. 559.

97 - The teaching of Buddha in ethical and religious form.

98 - The liberal development within Buddhism and practice in the first century A.D. in China, Tibet, Mongolia, Nepal, Korea, and Japan. In Mahāyāna Buddhism the prime emotion is compassion and is ranked equal to wisdom as a means of achieving enlightenment.

99 - *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 400.

100 - The founder of Buddhism. About in his thirty, he left the luxuries of the all earthly ambitions for the life of an ascetic life.



personification of wisdom, here the virtue of 'insight' (*panna*), one of the main elements of wisdom, is personified as a goddess of wisdom, '*prajñāpā ramitā*', and she is regarded as 'mother'.

While many who grow up in a Buddhist environment regard her as a goddess, who can be invoked and who bestows merit, well being, and blessing, Buddhist theologians have taken a different view, seeing in her simply a spiritual manifestation of redemptive wisdom called the 'mother of enlightenment'. Later, in one of the Mahāyāna Schools, the 'Tantric School'<sup>101</sup> wisdom unites in itself all aspects of religion, both in theory and in practice.<sup>102</sup>

### 5- Persian:

As with other civilisations, the representatives of Persian wisdom were the kings, viziers and priests. Priests in particular first collected proverbs and transmitted them from one generation to another, both as speech and action. Although the dominant themes of wisdom in Persia were religious, such as Zoroastrianism<sup>103</sup>, secular knowledge is also present in wisdom literature in the guise of worldly practical experiences.<sup>104</sup>

Zoroastrianism and its priestly schools, or the (fire) temples, have been at the centre of the Divine wisdom literature in Iran. Zoroaster<sup>105</sup> (c. 1000 B.C.) must always

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101 - A later form of Buddhism arising out of development in the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition together it's own form especially in Tibet.

102 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol., 15. p. 400.

103 - It is the most important and best known religion of pre-Islamic Iran. It takes its name from its founder Zarathustra (Zoroaster) who probably lived around the beginning of the first millennium B. C. Although some claim that Mazdaism was a different religion, in fact the Zoroastrianism and Mazdaism are synonymous. Ahura Mazda (wise lord) is the only name for the Zoroastrian God. (See, The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, London, 1986).

104 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 398.

105 - According to Muḥammad Iqbāl, Zoroaster was the great prophet of Iran, who lived and taught in the age of Solon and Thales. (See, Muḥammad Iqbāl, Development of Metaphysics in Persia, Bazm-Iqbāl, Lahore, 1959).

be assigned the first place in the intellectual history of Iran. However, like other ancient wisdom literature, the Persian tradition also contains the idea that wisdom is a heavenly female person, who was created by Ohrmazda and through whom God created the world.<sup>106</sup>

In the Sasanid period two important texts, *Dénkard* (Acts of Religion) and *Dādistān ī Ménōg ī Khrad* (The Book of Judgements of the Spirit of Wisdom), were compiled from oral traditions. According to the *Ménōg ī Khrad*, one of the principal works, the main line of the wisdom of Persia goes back to God. Also Avesta, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, propounds a theory of wisdom, which in its treatment of knowledge and behaviour, is virtually identical to the religious teaching of Zoroastrianism, though in a poetic and proverbial form.<sup>107</sup> Although in Zoroastrianism, secular wisdom was not completely absent, it evolved in a religious context and wisdom was also accepted as the essence of it. According to the wise man of Zoroastrianism, if faithful people join their circle, God becomes close to them.

The other important thing is that like Babylonian wisdom, one branch of Persian wisdom was progressed through a fatalistic pessimism. Maybe one of the most apparent differences between Persian wisdom literature and others, is that in religion, experiential common wisdom and philosophy united and became a single system. Even this characteristic of Iranian culture, preserved all its history of thought.

## 6- China:

In China, in contrast to other ancient Asian civilisations, such as India and Persia, wisdom has minimal connections with religion. For this reason the whole aspects of daily life is the subject of practical wisdom. In Confucianism<sup>108</sup> for instance, wisdom was the cardinal virtue that represents the moral character of the Confucian

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106 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 399.

107 - Ibid.

108 - The oldest ethical school of Chinese thought.



'wise person' (*Hsün-tzu*).<sup>109</sup> Both major religions of China, Confucianism and Taoism, insisted that salvation in this world, depends on humans living according to the Tao, the structure of reality or God.

In general, the Chinese wisdom (*chin*) was established from the sense of right and wrong. According to their view, every human being has the ability to be wise, but he or she needs only instruction and practice, since human nature itself is good. In Confucianism, unlike other literature, there is the idea of the "holy man" (*shengjen*) who is superior over all other people, even the wise man, since he complies perfectly with all the principles (*li*), such as living in harmony with nature and society.<sup>110</sup>

Confucianism recognises five cardinal virtues. The moral code of Confucianism based on these five virtues. These are *jên*, 'benevolence', which shows itself in the feeling of sympathy for others; *yi*, 'duty', reflected in the feeling of shame after a wrong action; *li*, 'manners', propriety, good form, reflected in the feeling of deference; *chih*, wisdom, reflected in the sense of right and wrong; and *hsin*, good faith, trustworthiness.<sup>111</sup>

Briefly, in China the real meaning of wisdom is the practical management of life through world experience and knowledge of human beings. Unlike the Greeks' speculative character of wisdom, which will be examined in the following paragraphs, the wisdom of China aimed to order the life of individuals and create a moral structure which was totally practical for daily life. To reach this standard of an ethical daily life, in brief they suggested one should live in harmony with the universe as a whole.

## 7- Greek Wisdom:

Under this title I will not give detailed information, since Greek wisdom or philosophy will be discussed in the following heading. Briefly we can say that the

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109 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 400.

110 - Ibid., vol. 15, p. 401.

111 - The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths, Edited by R. C. Zaehner, p. 365.

first wise men of the Greeks, lived in the Ionic cities of Greece, Italy and Sicily, at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. Since the Greek *élite* were the business and craft community, they visited many ancient centres in Egypt and Babylon, and they were influenced by them through the wisdom literature and practical cultures.

From the Egyptians and Babylonians, the Greeks learned wisdom, arithmetic, geometry and navigation. This knowledge was then systematised as philosophy within the context of the emerging democratic life of the Greek cities. There is no doubt that Pythagoras was one of the first teacher of wisdom among the early Greek philosophers who was influenced by the Eastern Religions and wisdom literature. Also, both Plato and Aristotle were aware of the Egyptian and their Babylonian wisdom literature in some way. The other accounts accepted that, the Epicurean tendencies revealed in the Egyptian Song of the Harder find expression in a remarkable fragment from the Gilgamesh Epic.

However, it is true that Greek wisdom was a quite systematic method of thinking, employing the usage of Logic, and for this reason it was called philosophy, because of its scientific nature and division from religion.

### **Conclusion:**

From Mesopotamia to Egypt, it appears that most wisdom literature sought to provide the fundamental knowledge for living a good life and gaining an understanding of the basic nature of reality. The central aim of such wisdom literature was to cultivate a skilled and insightful understanding of the structure of existence. These structures incorporated the primary categories of human beings, society and Divine Revelation.

Although wisdom was originally concerned with issues of this 'world', it was generally theologised and gained philosophical character. Therefore, wisdom would lead people to learn about God's will in this world, the workings of the universe and knowing what is good for humankind. The sources of wisdom literature are either practical experience or Divine revelation are transmitted by a father or a master, to child or student as a kind of collective knowledge on which any civilisation can be easily built.



## II- PRE-ISLAMIC GREEK PHILOSOPHY

### Introduction:

To study Islamic philosophy and wisdom beside the Qur'ān and Sunna involves to know the general historical background of the pre-Islamic Greek philosophy as a whole. Because late development of philosophical studies such as Neoplatonism was driven from this origin. On these historical foundation it would be easy to show the development of theoretical Islamic wisdom as philosophy (*falsafa*).

Around sixth century B.C. Greeks accepted the philosophy as a method of investigation. Their objectives was to reach a systematic and theoretical thinking method rather than just daily practical experiences. Although in the Greek mind philosophy (love of wisdom) was established on the wisdom aspects, which was collected from both their culture and the other ancient civilisations, by the 'philosophy' they meant as a kind of pure theoretical thinking process. However, it does not mean that there was not any theoretical reflection in other civilisations before the Greeks. In fact before the Greeks, there was many thinkers who solved their problems but by faith and practical experience rather than deep and serious systematic or theoretical study.

Since for the first time Greeks started the theoretical thinking in philosophical form we accepted that officially philosophy is derived from the Greek civilisation. They were concerned with questions regarding the nature of reality or cosmology such as the 'stuff' or 'fabric' of the universe, and the difference between seeming and reality. The result of this discussion, God, human and the Nature became the main subject of philosophy. These three main philosophical problem were discussed by philosophers in three period; cosmological, anthropological and systematic periods.

### A- COSMOLOGICAL PERIOD:

Pre-Socratic philosophy is also called Ionic philosophy or Natural philosophy. The first philosophical thinkers lived in the Ionic cites of Greece, Italy and Sicily at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. The first philosophers, were influenced by the Egyptians and Babylonians and they learned from them arithmetic, geometry and navigation.

The first Greek philosophers' main concern was about the nature of reality and the 'arche' which means the origin of things. Thus, in this way one can learn the difference between seeming illusion and reality. Their other interests were the essence and laws of being. They attempted to give a reasoned explanation, instead of the existing religion-mythological explanations of the origin of the basic "construction material" and the fundamental structure of our physical world.<sup>112</sup>

### 1- The Miletus School:

Miletus was one of the Ionic cities of Asia Minor situated on the south bank of the river Maeander (Menderes). Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes were interested in the cosmos and for this reason these Greek philosophers were called the Milesian cosmologists or Naturalists.

a- Thales of Miletus (the sixth century B.C.) travelled in Egypt and probably learned arithmetic and geometry, because he showed, how to calculate the height of a pyramid and how to calculate the distance of a ship at sea from observations taken at two points on the shore. According to Herodotus, Thales successfully predicted an eclipse of the sun which took place on 28 May 585 B.C. He was accepted as the first philosopher because he gave a purely natural explanation of nature instead of a mythological explanation. On the other hand he claimed that water is the material cause of all things. In other words everything had components of water. But this water is not only the chemical compound (H<sub>2</sub>O) but any liquid.

b- Anaximander (c. 611-546 B.C.) was an associate of Thales and the second philosopher of the Milesian school. He accepted that there must be one basic substance which is different from any other element underlying existence. According to Anaximander that basic material was neither water nor other elements; he calls it the "Apeiron" or boundless. It is indeterminate, eternal and equally material, all things originate from it and all things will return to it.

Anaximander was the first to understand upward and downward. Downward means toward the middle of Earth and upward away from it. On the other hand

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112 - Walsh, A History of Philosophy, p. 1.



Anaximander tried to give detail about human beings. He maintains that all land animals are descendants of sea animals.

The *Apeiron* was the first purely rational concept and for this reason Anaximander was believed to be a pure philosopher the same as Thales.

c- Anaximenes (the sixth century B.C.) thought that air was the origin of all things. All things are formed from air but it is not merely physical stuff (*gaseous*) but also it becomes wind, water, earth and stone.<sup>113</sup>

The first Greek philosophers' basic problem was to discover the basic material of the universe and the primary element, or matter. However, these three philosophers were not considered to be materialist, because their basic material was a kind of living matter. For this reason their philosophy was often called hylozoism<sup>114</sup>.

## 2- Heraclitus:

Heraclitus (c.536-470 B.C.) lived in the city of Ephesus (Ephesus) some thirty miles north of Miletus. In the history of philosophy he has been called "Dark Heraclitus", because his fragments were hard to understand. He believed everything to be flexible; you can never step twice into the same water of a river. Matters are forever moving, changing and developing. 'Becoming' was controlled by the *logos* which is the measure of the change which governs all things. Heraclitus said that, "Nothing is changeless but change." According to Heraclitus opposition is the life of the world, but in pure fire which is the eternal wisdom all those oppositions disappear in their common ground. He used the term 'fire' like a symbol of this 'becoming'. Heraclitus accepted that all things are one and everything is 'becoming'.<sup>115</sup>

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113 - Ibid., p. 5.

114 - The philosophical doctrine that life is one of the properties of matter.

115 - Perelman, A Historical Introduction to Philosophical Thinking, p. 5.

### 3- The Eleatics' School:

Eleatic philosophy was at the opposite end of the spectrum to that of Heraclitus, affirming that only 'being' is becoming, and that only our senses are in flux. The Eleatic school included these philosophers; Parmenides, Zeno and Xenophanes.

a- Xenophanes: He was born c. in 560 B.C. He emigrated from Asia Minor to Elea in southern Italy. He clarified what was implied in the philosophy of Anaximenes. He rejected the Homeric anthropomorphic deities and anthropomorphic gods altogether. He argued that there is One God who is the ruler of the universe and this one God is eternal and He does not move but He moves all things by the thoughts of his mind. He sees and hears all things everywhere. Xenophanes observed that humanity have created gods in their own image. If they could, horses and oxen would also create gods in their own image.<sup>116</sup>

b- Parmenides of Elea (the fifth century B.C.): Parmenides was influenced by the teaching of the Pythagorean school. In a philosophical poem Parmenides said that, What is cannot have come into being and cannot pass away because it would have to have come out of nothing or to become nothing, whereas nothing by its very nature does not exist. He has very opposite views to Heraclitus because his philosophy is that of an immobile being. According to Parmenides the positive and the negative are merely different views of the same thing, death and life, day and night or light and darkness are really one.

c- Zeno of Elea (490- 430 B.C.) was a younger friend of Parmenides who tried to show more clearly the doctrine of Parmenides. Then he gave his own famous paradox such as 'the flying arrow rests since it can not move in the place in which it is not and that Achilles cannot outrun a turtle because when he has reached its starting point the turtle would have moved to a further point. He polemically showed that there is possible neither multiplicity, nor movement because these notions lead to contradictory consequences. Being is one; motionless and material.

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116 - Hilsberger, A Short History of Western Philosophy, p. 9.



#### 4- The Pythagorean School:

Pythagoras (c.580-497 B.C.) originally came from the Ionic City of Samos. Pythagoras travelled in the East and in Egypt then returned to Samos. When the island of Samos fell under the despotic rule of Polycrates he migrated to Craton in southern Italy. There he founded a religious brotherhood and he organised a mathematical-metaphysical and mystical doctrine. In his doctrine he accepted the theory of the transmigration of souls and adopted the religious teachings of Orphism.

According to the Pythagorean thinker, the soul is Divine but is imprisoned in the body. They used music to purify and refine the soul. They believed in the immortality of the soul and its transmigration from the body. At the same time, they claimed that all things are number and determined by number. Its meaning is that everything is made of numbered points. This idea developed from the order and harmony of universe because their conception of number was geometrical.

#### 5- The Pluralistic Cosmologies:

The pluralist philosophers were the opposite of the Milesian monist philosophers because the Milesian philosophers believed that the basic substance (*Arche*) was only one and it was a kind of living matter, but pluralist philosophers were mechanists and they accepted that *arche* is not only one basic element. That universe was made of plural elements.

a) Empedocles from Akragos (c 492- 432) worked out four material elements which are called "roots" (*anāsīr*); they are: fire, water, air, and earth. These four material are the principle elements of all things. Empedocles declared that the elements are constantly mixed with one another by 'love' and that they separate again by 'hate'.

b) Anaxagoras of Clacomenea (c. B.C. 500-428) rejected the Eleatic doctrine of the unitary nature of Being. On the other hand, he believes that at the beginning there were seeds of which everything was made. At the same time he claimed that everything is a collection of everything except '*Nous*' which is the formation of the cosmos and has all knowledge about everything. Anaxagoras believes that nothing can really come into being, everything must be contained in everything. In the

beginning all of this cosmos had been mixed in an even mixture. Everything was contained in it.<sup>117</sup>

## 6- Atomists:

*c. 460 BC - c 370 BC*

a- Leucippus: Leucippus (in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, B.C.) was the first of the earliest Greek Atomists. We know that he was a member of the school of Parmenides but so little is known of his life and philosophy that even his existence was doubted by Epicurus<sup>118</sup> (c.341-270 B.C.).<sup>119</sup>

b- Democritus (c. 460-371 B.C.) was interested both in cosmology and also the theory of knowledge. He worked out that everything was made of Atoms which are physically indivisible and uncountable. He tried to answer this question, "Why do things differ?" According to Democritus, it is because their atoms are different in size, shape, and relation to one another. He believed that there were no any gods and divine existence. For this reason he was the first strong pure materialist philosopher. He accepted that atoms have no sensual qualities.<sup>120</sup>

Democritus also developed some social and cultural ideas such as the need of humanity to work and to make inventions. He argued that when our life becomes too easy because all needs are met, there is a danger that civilisation will end.

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117 - Abernethy, Goerge L. and Thomas A. Longford, Introduction to Western Philosophy, p. 11.

118 - Founder of Epicurean philosophy. He was born of Athenian parents on the Island of Samos and he established a circle community at Athens called the Garden. He thought that pleasure and happiness are the natural end of the life, but these pleasures were not only consistent with intelligence and moderation. Today we have only a few fragments and letters from Epicurus' writings.

119 - Abernethy, Goerge L. and Thomas A. Longford, Introduction to Western Philosophy, p. 15, 16.

120 - Walsh, A History of Philosophy, p. 12.



## B- SOPHISTS AND SOCRATES

### 1- Sophists:

The Greek word '*sophistes*' originally meant "to make a profession of being inventive and clever". The sophists were wise men or a group of teachers who influenced the people and helped them to win court decisions even if the cause was not just.<sup>121</sup>

Before the sophist movement, Ionic cosmologist philosophers concentrated on the problem of the *arche* but they neglected to research human 'beings' own psychology. But in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. sophist philosophers took a different view from them and they started to investigate humanity's own problems and criticised the value of knowledge. Their attention was centred on the problem of human conduct. Therefore, for the first time a humanist tendency had begun by the early sophists.

Their first problem was the understanding of this question "Is there anything which can be known for certain in the human area? Or is there any certain knowledge? Their answer to this question was that nothing exists and there is no truth at all. For instance Gorgias (c 483-375)<sup>122</sup> said that, 'Being does not exist, if it does, it would be unable to know, if it were able to know, it could not be communicated.' He says again, "If Being did exist, it would have to be eternal or created at a given time; and it would have to be one or many, but it is neither eternal, created, single nor many." So, if there is no truth at all, what can we do? This is the main starting point. For this reason another famous sophist Protagoras (c. 490-420 B.C.) answered this question by stating that everything is relative, subjective and depends entirely on the personal opinions of the individual. Anything that seems to me to be so, is so for me and what seems to you to be so is so for you too. "Man is the measure of all

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121 - Abernethy, George L. and Thomas A. Longford, Introduction to Western Philosophy, p. 20.

122 - Celebrated rhetorician and sophist philosopher from Sicily. He spent the major part of his life in Greece particularly in Athens. His main idea can be summed as following sentence; "Being does not exist, if it does, it would be unable to know, if it were able to know, it could not be communicated".

things." In the view of the sophists, everything depends on human decisions and agreement.<sup>123</sup>

At the same time sophists advanced the theory of the relativity of moral norms. They believed that there are no universal principles which should govern human activities even in order for able individuals to achieve their aims. However, one of the late sophists, Thrasymachus (Late 5<sup>th</sup> century B. C.) declared that, "Right is what is beneficial for the stronger or better one."

## 2- Socrates (c. 470-399 B.C.) :

We have a little knowledge about both his life and his philosophy. Socrates' philosophy was practicable and he was a man of practical concerns. For this reason he wrote nothing in his life and he engaged to live by moral value and virtue. Socrates oriented his thinking towards human nature and ethics so that he was the greatest moralist in the history of philosophy.

However we know something about him from Plato's Dialogues and a few other sources. However, in Plato's dialogues it is difficult to understand which are Socrates' own ideas and which are Plato's since in these books Socrates was made to speak by Plato.

Although both Socrates and the Sophists tended to human problems rather than nature, their methods and aims were far from each other. The sophists' method was *rhetoric* (the art of speech) in contrast to that Socrates never taught by dogmatic method but he tried to work things out in conversations with everybody and he refused to accept any payment for his teaching as did the sophists. For this reason Plato put the case of Socrates' method of dialogue against the sophist rhetoric and dialectic.

However the sophists studied individually, not together and were all relativist who claimed that there is no final standard for judgement in our life. Socrates, on the contrary, believed that there are absolute norms which are discovered by wise men. In Plato's Dialogues, Socrates tried to give a universal definition of concepts such as

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123 - Hilsberger, A Short History of Western Philosophy, p. 10.



piety, truth and justice. About Socrates' philosophy Aristotle maintained that; "Two things must be ascribed to Socrates; his search for universal concepts and his analysis of reality with other people."<sup>124</sup>

According to Socrates virtue is knowledge; no one does wrong willingly. If you had known for yourself any action was bad you would not have done it. But also Socrates was not interested in individual happiness which is our own happiness. According to Socrates there is only one standard, true action, which is different from the other wrong actions, so if we act according to intelligence we can find this true action.<sup>125</sup>

In 400/399 B.C. he was brought to the Athenian Court and two charges brought against him: the first was that he did not worship the gods and the second was that of corrupting the youth of the city. The jury evidently wanted to provide him with a way of escape; However he did not want to escape and showed his contempt. He was condemned to death and he drank hemlock and with great courage waited for his death.<sup>126</sup>

## C- SYSTEMATIC PERIOD

### 1-Plato (c.428-348 B.C.):

Plato was born into an aristocratic family in Athens. His mother, Perictione, was a descendant of the family of Solon and his father, Ariston, traced his ancestry to the last kings of Athens. Plato was given the best elementary education before meeting his teacher Socrates and then Plato spent eight years with Socrates from his twentieth year to the death of Socrates.

Plato established his own school in Athens in 387 B.C. known as the Academy which was the first school to have more than one teacher and more than one subject. Mathematics together with astronomy and philosophy were taught in this school.

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124 - Abernethy, Goerge L. and Thomas A. Longford, Introduction to Western Philosophy, p. 26.

125 - Ibid., p. 23.

126 - Ibid.

Until his death at the age of eighty in 347 B.C. Plato was the principal of the school.

We know some stories about Plato's journeys to Greece, Italy, Sicily and Egypt but we are not sure about the detail of these journeys. He somehow acquired knowledge of Pythagoreans, Heraclitus, and other pre-Socratic philosophers. Some stories say that to establish his ideal state he travelled three times to the island Syracuse in Sicily where Dinysius the Elder had been the military governor or tyrant but he did not succeed with his plan.<sup>127</sup>

-Writing: He wrote more than twenty five authentic dialogues in which Socrates usually figured as the central character. These dialogues naturally fell into three classification. In his early dialogues he tried to give the definition of some general concepts such as 'valour' and 'beauty'. However in these dialogues it appears that Plato did not reach any certain definitions of such concepts, on the contrary he reaches more than one suggestion. In his writing of the middle period such as '*Phaedo*' and the '*Republic*', which are non dramatic dialogues, for the first time, Plato put forward a systematic doctrine. In his late writings like '*Parmenides*', '*Sophist*' and '*Laws*' (*Nomoi*) he tended the radical reappraisal and modification.<sup>128</sup>

After the death of Plato the academy continued until it was closed by emperor Justinian in 529 A.D. In this school the early scholars adopted a Pythagorean interpretation of Plato's ideas and concentrated on practical moral problems.

-Thought: Plato was affected by three main sources: Socrates' philosophy, Orphism and Pythagorean thought and the Egyptian and Persian civilisations. From Socrates, Plato learnt that the problems of human life can be solved by the morality of invariable norms. From Pythagorean philosophy, he learnt the theory of soul transformation and the truths of mathematics linked with the belief in a perfectible immortal soul. From Egypt Mathematics and from Persia and Orphic religion he

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127 - The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edwards Paul, vol.: 5-6, , p. 315.

128 - Flew, A Dictionary of Philosophy, p. 254.



learnt that the life of earth is a life of shadow and that the soul is freed to rise to the real world after death.<sup>129</sup>

**-The Doctrine of Ideas:** The doctrine of ideas was the central point of Plato's philosophy as shown in the famous myth of the cave, in the passage from the *Republic*. In this metaphor an ordinary person who was sitting in a cave and looking at the wall, saw only the shadows of real things that were occurring behind his back and Plato likened the philosophers to this man who has been out of the world of the ideas but he is the only one who knows the 'realm' and again he conducts his life accordingly.<sup>130</sup> Our world which is the world of perception is a reflection of the world of ideas and individual things participate in their ideas.

In this myth, Plato worked out a new view of the world. Human lives on earth is a life of darkness and shadows of ideas and humanity's souls are chained to the earth by their imprisoned bodies. If the soul turns to the intelligible world it will be free from the body and lead a higher existence. At the top of all ideas there is the idea of the 'Good' which dominates the other ideas and they participate in it. On the other hand, there is an ideal form for everything. For example: humans, dogs and even artificial things like tables houses and books are shadows of the ideal forms which exist in the world of ideas. The idea of 'Good' governs these two sorts of worlds.

According to Plato, humans can know the changeable world of bodies by the senses, but they are imperfect copies of the eternal ideas. Humans discover another world which is the world of ideas by the intellect and this is the level of scientific knowledge and this is reached in mathematics and philosophy.

Plato found in reality certain characteristics which make possible a rational study of it. But for our knowledge, we depend on our senses, sometimes we perceive things imperfectly. On the other hand our concepts are not absolutely independent of sense experience, because they come to us with reference to the perceptual world. Another world, the world of ideas, is unseen and we know these realities or ideas in an earlier existence when our souls were with the gods in the world of ideas.

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129 - Perelman, *An Historical Introduction to Philosophical Thinking*, p. 35.

130 - *The New Encyclopaedia of Britannic* (London, 1962), vol. 25, p. 895.

**-Ethics:** The ethics of Plato began with Socrates' sentence "Virtue is knowledge." Only a wise person knows what is right because there can be only one ideal common standard by which all customs and actions must be measured. What constitutes true and proper goodness (moral values) was Plato's first problem that moral value was independent of human will which was quite different from material and subjective usefulness.

**-God:** Plato believed that there must be something which is non material such as soul and mind. According to Plato the first non material thing was the "Idea of Good". However, like Aristotle, Plato's God did not create this world from nothing. His God Demiurgus<sup>131</sup> found shapeless matter already to hand and gave it a form. In other words Demiurgus was only the master-God.

Although Plato used the language of ancient Greek pluralist religion he believed in only one God. According to Plato this God was the form of all forms and more perfect than perfect things. On the other hand Plato claimed that human life on this earth was a life of darkness and shadows. At the same time Plato believed that there must be an afterlife that is in the Divine World. Plato also wrote a blessing at the end of his book '*Phaedrus*' which assigns his inner beliefs: "O beloved Pan and all the other gods of this place, make me beautiful in my inner soul. May my outward self harmonise with my inward being. May I think the wise man rich, and of gold may I have only so much as a moderate man may bear."<sup>132</sup>

**-State:** Plato wrote a special book about the state and its establishments as well as its members. In the *Republic* Plato described a city state in which social justice was fully realised. In other words this state was a utopia. In this republic Plato concerned humanity with the community's happiness not only the individuals happiness. The natural source of the state was to fulfil human needs such as economy, social order and external and internal power. For this reason the state was

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131 - Demiurge for the first time was used by Socrates like the word of God from inner dimension of the man by which one can choose the correct way.

132 - Hilsberger, A History of Western Philosophy, p. 24-25, 895.



an organisation that guaranteed social and material orders. But the state was not an aim in itself, it was the middleman for man on the way to the Idea of Good.<sup>133</sup>

Plato's state contained three classes: the philosopher-kings, the guardians and the workers. These classes were likened to the human body by Plato. The philosopher-kings were perceived as the head of the body and their virtue was wisdom. The guardians were the legs and arms their virtues were valour and courage. And the workers were the trunk and their virtue was to be hard-working.

The other important thing about Plato's state is the way in which the philosophers and guardians were to live a garrison life, with no private property nor private families. These two highest classes were to consider themselves as a big family and they would live a community life. But this was not a form of communism because it was suggested for the minority of citizens, whereas communism is interested in the majority the workers.

## 2- Aristotle (384-322 B. C):

Aristotle was born in Stagira in Macedon in 384 B.C. His father Nicomachus was the physician of King Amyntas II. Aristotle's father died when he was a young boy and he was raised by a guardian, Proxenus, who registered him in Plato's Academy at about 367 B.C. At that time, Aristotle was nearly twenty years of age. He studied at Plato's Academia until the death of Plato in 348 B.C. After the death of Plato, Aristotle joined a Platonic circle at Assos and he spent three years there, then moved to Mytilene on the Island of Lesbos in 345 B.C.<sup>134</sup> Three years later he was invited to become a tutor to the young Alexander of Macedon (Alexander the Great). In 335 B.C. he returned to Athens, where he spent the following twelve years as head of his school called the 'Lyceum'. Upon the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. the school was threatened by the anti Macedonian feelings at

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133 - Ibid. p. 897.

134 - The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edward Paul, p. 151.

Athens in 323. For this reason Aristotle went to Chalcis on the Island of Euboea and died there one year later at the age of sixty two.<sup>135</sup>

Until the time of Aristotle no science has yet systematised. He was the founder of many sciences such as botany, logic, and ethics. Another important credit for Aristotle was that he was the first philosopher who established the biggest library in Athens. On the other hand he was the supervisor of Alexander the Great and due to this position he influenced the scientific commission of Alexander for collecting some plants and animal species as well as books, especially from eastern cultures.

-Writing: The extant works of Aristotle cover almost all the sciences and philosophical treatises known in his time. They were one of the most amazing achievements for a single mind.<sup>136</sup> He wrote some scientific and philosophical treatises, popular books, as well as memoranda and collections of material.

-Logical works (*the Organon*): *Categories, On Interpretation, Prior and Posterior Analytic, Topics, On Sophistic Refutations*; Physical works (Physics): *On The Heavens, On Coming to Be and Passing Away, Meteorology*; Psychological works: *On The Soul (De Anima), Parva Naturalia* (Reminiscence and Dreams); Works on natural history: *On The Parts of Animals, On The Movement of Animals, On The Progression of Animals, On The Generation of Animals*; Philosophical works: *Metaphysics, Nicomachean Ethics, Eudemian Ethics, Magna morale, Politics, Rhetoric, Art of Poetry*.<sup>137</sup>

Aristotle died before he was able to check and correct his lecture notes. His pupil Theophrastus listed and published them together with his own writings. Unfortunately both Theophrastus (c. 371-287) own writings and Aristotle's works have not been protected very well and they have been damaged by damp and

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135 - Ibid.

136 - The Dictionary of Philosophy, Edited by Dagobert D. Runes, p. 20.

137 - The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edward Paul, vol. I, p. 151.



vermin.<sup>138</sup> Because of the above reasons Aristotle's writings have suffered, there are many gaps here and there.

**-Thought:** From the very beginning of philosophy until the time of Aristotle three significant problems have been investigated: nature, humanity and metaphysics. Then Aristotle added logic to this list. His main aim was to find a reliable research method for all of the sciences.

According to Plato the world of ideas was the real world and the world of perception was merely a reflection of it. Aristotle opposed this idea and declared that it is not necessary to believe in the existence of the world of ideas. For Aristotle, the world of the senses was the real world. On the other hand Aristotle claimed that the real being was universal but it is not outside of the individual 'things'; on the contrary it is the essence of individual "things" that gives only general attributes of the same group of elements so that every object has an essence that shows its universal forms. The task of science is to show how the special appearance comes out from the universal cause. From here he came into contact with categories. Every judgement would answer ten kinds of questions for an object; substance, relation, quantity, quality, time, place, action, passivity, posture, and possession.

**-Logic:** For Aristotle logic was the science of thought and speech that shows what is true and what is wrong. According to Aristotle's view we grasp the information by judgements that are either true or not. All of the concepts and judgements come from individual 'things' experience. First of all, we perceive individual 'things' and recognise their essences and then we reach a general concept that includes all this kind of things under one conceptual umbrella. If we find this general concept our thinking will be much easier and correct to define things. According to this point of view Logic is the correct link between universal and individual things. Aristotle shows that the infinite world of the thinking mind uses no more than three simple

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138 - Kaya, *Islam Kaynaklari Isiginda Aristoteles ve Felsefesi (Aristotle and his Philosophy in the Light of Muslim Sources)*, p. 73, (Turkish).

basic elements; the concept, the judgement and the syllogism.”<sup>139</sup> The end of the Aristotelian syllogism concerns the conclusion. Let us give the famous example:

- All men are mortal.

- Socrates is a man.

- Therefore Socrates is mortal.

In a normal syllogism there are three terms: major, minor and middle. According to the above example, man is middle, Socrates is minor and mortal is a major term. The middle term does not have to be in the conclusion.

-Metaphysics: The name of metaphysics was originally used by the editors of Aristotle. They put forward his philosophical writing after the title of ‘physics’. It was a chronological system but at the same time it was a good accident. Philosophers have used this title logically ‘*meta physica*’ (after the physics)

For Aristotle every movement or change implies a cause or a mover but this chain of causes cannot be infinite. The first cause is God who created the existence and motion. Aristotle’s God only formed the pure matter but his influences are manifested not by mechanical impulse, but also by virtue of the perfection of all desires.

Aristotle claimed that there was no world of forms independent of matter. For this reason Aristotle opposed the earlier philosophers who were only interested in matter and neglected form. At this point Aristotle questioned the concept of change and through reexamined the issue of creation. How the first matter became a particular ‘thing’. Here, Aristotle distinguished three types of change: qualitative change, quantitative change and change of place. In this world there are four matters namely: soil, weather, water and fire. Movement on this earth comes in the form of a straight line and the movement beyond the moon comes in the circular form.

Aristotle solved the problem of change and permanence which was argued between Heraclitus and Parmenides’ school, by the concept of ‘progressing’. According to Aristotle the real being was in the progress of individual things. Every change is

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139 - Hilsberger, A Short History of Western Philosophy, p. 25.



making the formation of matter (the formative period of matter). For the change, there are four sorts of elements; material cause, formal cause, goal cause and final cause. Every matter according to higher form is a matter but according to the lower matter it is a form. For example, brick for soil is form but for house it is matter. Whole matters transfer in the series of pure matter to the pure form. God is at the top of this series. This series starts from shapeless matter and reaches to immaterial form.

-The relationship between body and soul: According to Aristotle the human body is matter and its soul is form which can be seen as the essence of the body. Therefore the soul is the final cause that is carried by the body. The soul is an immortal thing but it is also a mover and is dominant over the body. According to Aristotle there are different souls for different levels of life: the nutritive soul that exists in plants and is responsible for growth, and the sensitive level. The function of the sensitive soul, which is present also in animals, is motion. However human soul includes two kinds of souls: the plants and the animal soul.<sup>140</sup> Every part of these souls are the basis for high level souls. According to the human soul, the animal soul is matter and again in relation to the animal soul plant soul, is matter.

Aristotle divided humans intelligence into the active and the passive intelligence. Passive intelligence is determined by the individual person's special experience while active intelligence is the same for all people.

-Ethics: Aristotle started his ethical thinking by the old typical Greek question, When is a person good? For Aristotle, our main goal is to reach happiness. Another important question was that "what is happiness?" Aristotle answered that it is not the enjoyment or material possessions but the perfect manifestation of human nature. In other words when a person acts judiciously he/she will be happy.

Although happiness depends on external conditions the main subjects of happiness are internal. In other words, it is happiness that is targeted by a human's own activities which is perceived through this realisation of good. Humanity can be happy just to act intelligently, but the problem is that "How can we decide one is

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140 - Ibid., p. 5.

right". The answer for Aristotle to this question was, our behaviour is beautiful when it observes the exact medium between two extremes.

Ethical virtue focuses on the education of desire. After this education, the soul learns how to choose the best way. To reach this goal one has to rush to use the intelligence in a practical way and thus find the "golden middle". If we reach the golden middle way between two extremist ways and act accordingly by intelligence we can limit our desire and pleasure.

-The State: According to Aristotle human beings were social animals (*zoon politikon*) and only human beings in a community can reach the certain maturity of the soul. The main goal of the state is to ripen the citizen's sense of ethics. The monarchy is good but its opposite, tyranny is bad. Again, the aristocracy is a tiger if its governors are wise people but its opposite oligarchy is wrong because in it the governors attack wealth and fame since they were not educated as wise people. Briefly, according to Aristotle's point of view a good government depended on its governors' moral attitude and not on their number or the form of government.<sup>141</sup>

-Art: Aristotle in his book *Poetica* examined the doctrine of literary arts and explains what art is. According to Aristotle art is reproducing (*mimesis*). The subjects of literary reproduction are statement, rhythm and harmony. In a tragedy human feelings would have been purified from fears.

### Conclusion:

Consequently, the pre-Socratic philosophers tried to find the satisfactory answers for the following three main questions; What is the substance of this cosmos? Is Being one or is it not? and Is Being abiding or is it changing? Sophists did not believe that humans can find the truth; rather they claimed that the value of laws and the Divine World are meaningless. And they also denied the existence of any objective knowledge. In this way the sophists' philosophy carried the seeds of

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141 - This idea would be progressed by Fārābī in his book *al-Madīnat al-Fāḍila* and he gave also details of attributes of a king or caliph.



many late philosophical tendencies such as relativism, individualism, nihilism, scepticism and pragmatism.

Socrates (c. 470-399 B.C.) life was of great influence on his disciples' moral theories and logical thinking. However, since Socrates did not write anything in his life, his disciples tended to different directions and sometimes they claimed opposite ideas one to another. For example while his disciple Aristippus of Cyrene (c.435-356 B.C.)<sup>142</sup> was a hedonist who defined happiness as pleasure (*hedone*), Socrates' other disciple Antistenes (c. 443-366 B.C.)<sup>143</sup> claimed that all the laws and rules of social life are meaningless. But no doubt his greatest student was Plato, who is still the most popular philosopher and of influence on contemporary philosophical study.

One of the great disciple of Plato was Aristotle. His philosophy is more practical for the needs of the individual and the community because it always deals with scientific method rather than religio-metaphysical sophistication. For this reason Aristotle was the founders of many sciences. The other important aspect is that he established a philosophical system which includes all type of knowledge and life conducts such as metaphysics, theology, ethics, logic, psychology, and politics.

Among the above Greek philosophers in particular Plato and Aristotle had great influence on Muslim philosophers. However, the Muslim thinkers could not confront this two philosophers whole authentic ideas because of Neoplatonic tendencies. In other words Muslim philosophers received the interpretation of Neoplatonic philosophers on the idea of Aristotle and Plato rather than their real books. This argument would be researched in the chapters six, seven and eight.

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142 - Originally was a sophist philosopher but latter he became Socrates' disciple, and finally the founder of Cyrenaic School. He thought that pleasure, is the true end of life and all pleasures are equal in value, but differ in degree and duration; they should be controlled and moderated by reason.

143 - One of the sophist philosophers who was the founder of the Cynic School of Greek Philosophy. He also was accepted as first nominalist philosopher in history of philosophy.

## CHAPTER III

### WISDOM (*HIKMA*) IN THE QUR'ĀN

#### Introduction

Muslim scholars, in their study of the Qur'ān, have arrived at no clear consensus regarding the definition of wisdom (*ḥikma*) therein, nor indeed as to the hermeneutical method to be applied to the relevant verses. Two main factors underlay this lack of consensus amongst Muslim scholars. The first, and most deeply rooted problem, is simply that the history of the wisdom concept carries so many permutations in meaning. The second problem is the ambiguous nature of the verses in the Qur'ān which deal with the concept of wisdom. The Qur'ān offers nothing even approaching a systematic treatment of the concept of wisdom.

However, according to Imām Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328)<sup>144</sup> “Differences in opinion may arise as a result of many factors; either text is not clear, or one has not attended to it properly, or has not been aware of it, or has misunderstood it, or has been swayed by an opposite belief.”<sup>145</sup> Thus Taymiya makes an important point, arguing that where a text is seen to be ambiguous, this may stem as much from human ignorance of the concept of wisdom *per se*, as much as from any *actual* ambiguities in the text itself.

The variety of meanings which different historical epochs and cultures have attached to the concept of wisdom has undoubtedly enriched the subject area. However it should be aware of the impact that the cultural background of many

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144 - 'Aḥmad b. 'Abdulḥalīm b. 'Abdussalām b. 'Abdullāh b. Abu al-Qāsim al-Ḥarrānī al-Dimashqī al-Ḥanbalī, born in Ḥarran, he became a jurist in the Ḥanbalī school of law in Damascus, he then later taught in Cairo. He was imprisoned many times in Cairo, Alexandria and Damascus for his literal interpretations of the Qur'ān. He fought with some theologians such as sufis including Ibn 'Arabī and Ghazālī because of their philosophical tendency. He died in Damascus while in prison. All the members of his town came to his funeral. He wrote more than three hundred volumes. Some of his books are: *Siyāsa al-Sharī'yya, Fatawī', Imān, Jam' Bayn al-Naql wa al-'Aql, Furqān Bayn al-Awliyāullāh wa Awliyā' al-Shayṭān*”.

145 - Taymiya, An Introduction to the Exegesis of the Qur'ān, p. 25.



ancient civilisations had. The role of Hellenistic philosophies and important pre-Islamic religions had incalculable affects on the development of explanatory models regarding the concept of wisdom. Such historical influences cannot be ignored when viewing the Islamic experience, which certainly did not take place in a cultural vacuum.

The empirical evidence for the existence of these influences can be seen in the classical commentaries on the Qur'ān, where the definition of wisdom (*ḥikma*) differs markedly from one commentator to another. Indeed, this phenomenon did not affect only the classical interpretation of the Qur'ān (*tafsīr*), but impacted also on other Islamic disciplines including such key areas as the traditions of the Prophet (*ḥadīth*),<sup>146</sup> philosophy (*falsafa*), Sufism and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Thus the difficulties involved in the definition and explanation of the concept of wisdom were not an isolated case, but rather a prevalent trend within the Islamic sciences as a whole.

The following are some examples of the definitional diversity which existed amongst Muslim scholars. They are taken from the classical commentaries on the Qur'ān, which expounded both a definition and meaning of the concept of wisdom (*ḥikma*).<sup>147</sup>

- Full knowledge of the Islamic laws (*fiqh*) or jurisprudence.
- Knowledge and understanding of the legal and illegal things.
- Prophethood or Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad or legal ways.
- The Divine Inspiration bestowed on the prophets, but not codified in the form of a book.
- The power of understanding.

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146 - A sayings or traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad.

147 - These interpretations are collected from Dr. Taqī-ud-Dīn Al-Hilālī and Dr. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān's Qur'ān Interpretation entitled "*Interpretation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'ān*" which contains summary version of great commentators such as Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr.

-Good manners and high character.

-Religious knowledge and right judgement in daily affairs.

It is evident that all of the above interpretations and definitions concerning wisdom contain some elements of truth and accuracy, and therefore cannot be entirely disregarded. Nevertheless they lack the comprehensiveness whereby one could feel legitimately assured of claiming any one of them as a sufficient representation of the totality of the Qur'anic understanding of wisdom.

Though the Qur'ān does mention the actual word 'wisdom' (*ḥikma*), it does not define the concept directly. It does, however, contain a group of linked concepts, the purport of which are in close proximity to the specific designatory term of wisdom. This fact provides one possible methodological foundation upon which a Qur'anic definition of wisdom could be constructed. All of those verses which carry intimations of the traditionally ascribed central core elements of wisdom should be studied in a holistic, ie comparative, manner, in order to attain a systematic and internally consistent account. Thus the Qur'ān itself becomes the authoritative criterion in this hermeneutical approach, "explanation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān" (*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*).

#### A- CONCEPTS IN QUR'ĀN CLOSELY ASSOCIATED TO WISDOM

There are certain terms in the Qur'ān which are often linked to the term wisdom when it is mentioned. These words are; 'prophethood', 'kingdom', the 'Torah, and the Gospel', 'verses' ( which form the Qur'ān), 'knowledge', and 'judgement'. Although all of these terms are connected with the term wisdom (*ḥikma*), yet it is not exclusively synonymous with any of them. As Imām Ibn Taymiya has commented: "...there are very few words in the language (Arabic) which are synonymous; in the Qur'ān they are rare, and almost non-existent. It is very difficult to find a word which conveys all the meanings which are conveyed by another word; at best, it will be an approximation. This is one of the reasons why the Qur'ān is inimitable."<sup>148</sup> Therefore these link terms should be analysed in

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148 - Taymiya, An Introduction to the Exegesis of the Qur'ān, p. 23.



conjunction with the concept of wisdom (*ḥikma*). If a satisfactory definition can be achieved, and can be shown to rest on a reasoned utilisation of the Qur'ān, then it could be adopted as a tool of understanding, contributing to the general field of inquiry in Islamic thought.

### 1- Book and wisdom:

The word *ḥikma* occurs on twenty occasions in the Qur'ān. In eight of these it appears as "book and wisdom" (*al-kitāb wa al-ḥikma*), with God being identified as the source of *ḥikma* in each. In other Qur'ānic chapter *Sūrat al-Kahf*, there is a story in which Moses was tested with a triple-test by God's Servant (al-Khaḍir) to teach him on the Divine Wisdom behind the appearance world as follows: Moses asks al-Khaḍir who represents the Divine wisdom, to be allowed to follow the Master and learn from him the secret knowledge. He tells Moses that he will not be able to bear patiently that of which he has no experience or cognition. Moses persists and al-Khaḍir yields, but tells Moses that he is not to question anything which follows until al-Khaḍir himself raises the subject. So the Divine testing begins. Moses and Sage set off in a ship which the Sage then promptly holes. Moses forgetting his previous agreement and ask what has just happened. But when al-Khaḍir tells him, in effect, that he knew Moses would not be able to be quiet, Moses repents. They then meet a youth whom al-Khaḍir kills. Moses again asks why he was killed and then hear the similar response from the Sage. Moses again repents, telling the Sage that if he questions the Sage's actions once more, then al-Khaḍir will not be company with Moses. But the inevitable happens: having been inhospitably treated by the people of a certain town to which they have come, al-Khaḍir sets up a wall which is about to collapse, provoking the mercenary comment from Moses that if the Sage had wished, he could have charged for his labours. The implication is clearly that in this way they might have revenged themselves on the ungenerous townsfolk. But Moses has questioned the actions of al-Khaḍir once too often and according to Moses own previous injunction, they must now part company. Then Sage explains the rationale behind his strange actions. In this story, Moses' voice is that of the common man, of ordinary knowledge while al-Khaḍir

represent Divine wisdom as a supernatural knowledge.<sup>149</sup> Ian Richard Netton after giving the above summary to be a background for Ibn ‘Arabī’s interpretation concerning Moses and al-Khaḍir, concludes that Moses has failed the tests but, in this way Qur’ān seems to teach, so does - and will- everyone.<sup>150</sup> Similar to this instruction the following verses from the Qur’ān explain that the book (*kitāb*) and wisdom (*ḥikma*) are given to the Prophets to instruct and purify the people from evil and other immoral actions.

“...He has sent down to you of the book and wisdom (*ḥikma*) whereby He instructs you. And fear God, and know that God is all-aware of everything.”<sup>151</sup>

“...God has sent down to you the book and wisdom (*ḥikma*), and taught you that which you knew not. And ever great is the grace of God unto you.”<sup>152</sup>

“...We have sent among you a Messenger of your own, reciting to you Our verses and sanctifying you, and teaching you the book and wisdom (*ḥikma*), and teaching you that which you used not to know.”<sup>153</sup>

“(Abraham said) Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall recite unto them Your verses and instruct them in the book and wisdom(*ḥikma*), and sanctify them. Verily! You are the all-mighty, the all-wise.”<sup>154</sup>

“He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His Verses, purifying them, and teaching them the

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149 - The Qur’ān 18: 60-72, and Netton, *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the House of Islam*, pp. 60, 61.

150 - See more detailed explanation, *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the House of Islam*, by Ian Richard Netton, Curzon Press, 1996, pp between 59-70.

151 - The Qur’ān, 2: 231.

152 - Ibid., 4: 113.

153 - Ibid., 2: 151.

154 - Ibid., 2: 129.



'book and wisdom (*ḥikma*). And verily, they had been before in manifest error."<sup>155</sup>

"...He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His verses, and purifying them, and instructing them (in) the book and wisdom (*ḥikma*) while before that they had been in manifest error."<sup>156</sup>

From the use of these two words and above cited verses we can conclude that book refers to a prescribed command and wisdom means the method of application. Together they represent the transformation process through which human beings may realise their divinely bestowed inner destiny to be the representative of God (*khalifatullāh*). Thus an argument may be constructed to the effect that the central goal of the Qur'anic revelation is to unify wisdom understanding as practice with the absolute ethical imperatives of the Qur'ān.

## 2- Verses, news, and wisdom:

There are some verses in the Qur'ān which appear to adopt alternatives to the common formula of 'book and wisdom'; In these verses variant formulas are utilised whereby the word 'book' is no longer present. Thus in place of the term 'book', words such as 'verses' and 'news' are incorporated along with the always present term 'wisdom'; "And remember that which is recited in your houses of the verses of God and *al-ḥikma* (wisdom). Verily, God is ever most courteous, well-acquainted with all things."<sup>157</sup>

"And indeed there has come to them news wherein there is (enough worrying) to check (them from evil), perfect wisdom, but (the preaching of) Warners benefit them not, so ( O Muḥammad) withdraw from them. The day that the caller will call to a terrible thing."<sup>158</sup>

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155 - Ibid., 62: 2.

156 - Ibid., 3: 164.

157 - Ibid., 33: 34.

158 - Ibid., 54: 4-6.

However, I would argue that the variant words in question can only be reasonably understood if we suppose that they are describing one and the same reality which is designated by the term 'book', namely revelation in the form of the written word. What else could terms such as 'verse' and 'news' possibly be referring to. The semantic links between book, news and verses are very clear. The Qur'ān states that "These are the verses of the clear book (*kitāb*). Verily We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ān in order that you may understand."<sup>159</sup>

Thus I am proposing that these terms are in fact interchangeable, and do not represent any shift in the fundamental meaning as demonstrated in the following example; "Indeed God conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them his verses, and purifying them, and instructing them in the book and wisdom (*hikma*) while before that they had been in manifest error."<sup>160</sup>

"...We have sent among you a Messenger of your own, reciting to you our verses and sanctifying you, and teaching you the book and the *hikma*, and teaching you that which you used not to know."<sup>161</sup>

The contemporary Turkish commentator (*mufassir*) Sulaymān Ateş mentions that the term 'book' refers to a kind of general belief system, which begins with Abraham and reaches its culmination in the dispensation given to the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>162</sup> In his book "*The Qur'anic Concepts*", Muḥammad al-Behiy applies the same definition but broadens the time period, beginning with Adam rather than Abraham. Al-Behiy also follows the general definition of wisdom which I have outlined so far, claiming that the concept of *ḥikma* when used in conjunction with his definition of 'book', can be defined as the theoretical side of the faith manifested

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159 - Ibid., 12: 1, 2.

160 - Ibid., 3: 164.

161 - Ibid., 2: 151.

162 - Ateş, Tafsir, vol. 1, p. 239, (Turkish).



in praxis.<sup>163</sup> This notion is very close to that of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149-1209)<sup>164</sup>, who defined *ḥikma* as the unification of speech and action (theory and practice).<sup>165</sup>

Other scholars have advanced alternative interpretations of these verses, often linking wisdom in this context with the Sunna. Thus for Shāfi'ī<sup>166</sup> “book and wisdom” refers to the Qur'ān and Sunna respectively. Shāfi'ī also claims that the word wisdom (*ḥikma*) implies not only the concept of reading, but also speech, which he claims is a reference to the traditions (*ḥadīth*) of the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>167</sup> Proposing such a definite link is certainly not unproblematic, however, I think Shāfi'ī is justified in making the connection between ‘wisdom’ and ‘Sunna’, in the sense that wisdom is certainly present in the practice of the prophet Muḥammad.<sup>168</sup>

### 3- Book, wisdom, Torah, and Gospel:

A well known verse in the Qur'ān concerning Jesus reads as follows: “...O Jesus, son of Mary! remember my favour to you and to your mother when I supported you with *Rūḥ al-Qudus* so that you spoke to the people in the cradle and in

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163 - Behiy, Kurani Kavramlar, (The Qur'ānic concepts), p. 31, (Turkish).

164 - Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Taymī al-Bakrī, Abū 'Abdullāh, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149-1209). One of the most celebrated theologians and well known scholar in Uṣūl al-Fiqh and tafsīr. He originated from Ṭabaristān. He died in Harāt. Among his books are the following: *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, *al-Maḥṣūl fī 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, and *al-Masā'il al-Khamsūn fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*.

165 - Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn, Mefātīhu al-Ghayb., vol. 4, p. 66, (Turkish).

166 - Shāfi'ī Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-'Abbās b. 'Uthmān b. Shāyī' al-Hāshimī al-Qurayshī al-Maḥlabī, Abū 'Abdullāh, was born in Ghazza in Palestine. To him Shāfi'ī school- one of the four Sunni school (madhhab)- is ascribed. When he was two years old he was brought to Mecca and early in his life become a follower of Mālik b. Anas (c. 716-795). But when he visited Iraq and later Egypt, he developed a system of law depending mostly on ḥadīth. He died in Cairo. Among his books, *Umm*, *Musnad*, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, *Risāla*, and *Jimā' al-'Ilm* are more popular.

167 - Shāfi'ī, Jimā' al-'Ilm, p. 15.

168 - S. M. Yusuf, An Essay on the Sunnah, Islamic Quarterly, (Lahore, 1966), 5.

maturity; and when I taught you the book (writing), wisdom (*ḥikma*), the Torah and the Gospel;...”<sup>169</sup>

This is one of the most difficult of Qur’anic verses concerning wisdom, as it seems to make a distinction between four concepts which traditionally are assumed to converge within the subsumptive category of ‘book’. This verse would seem to rule out a simple association between the concepts of ‘book’, ‘Gospel’, ‘Torah’ and ‘wisdom’. This verse appears to support the view of the majority of Muslim scholars in their assertion that *ḥikma* is something other than the Qur’ān.<sup>170</sup> Even Qurṭūbī (d. 1272)<sup>171</sup> related a view which may have had some currency at the time, that the ‘book’ is writing and calligraphy, while some say that the book is neither the Torah nor Gospel but a different book which God gave to Jesus.<sup>172</sup>

At this point it should be noted that the Qur’ān employs a further formulaic construction in which the more common combination of “book and wisdom” is replaced with the phrase “book and judgement (*ḥukm*)”. I would suggest that there is a semantic link between the latter sections of these two constructions, namely ‘wisdom’ and ‘judgement’. The word ‘judgement’ in this context must refer to something other than knowledge of the divine commands themselves simply as commands (ie abstract), as these are already present in the ‘book’. Thus the word ‘judgement’ must refer to a process which occurs after the divine commands have become known.

By definition, to execute a judgement means deciding between two or more options (historical contingencies). At this point the question arises as to how one can arrive at a correct decision (judgement) when faced with these options (historical

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169 - The Qur’ān, 5: 110.

170 - Muṣṭafā al-Sibā’ī, *al-Sunna wa Makānatuhu fī al-Tashrī’ al-Islāmī*, Cairo, 1985, p. 50-55; Quoted from *Rethinking Traditions in Modern Islamic Thought*, by Danial W. Brown, p. 56.

171 - Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Bakr b. Faraj al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī al-Andalusī, Muslim scholar of the Mālikī law school, an expert on ḥadīth and well-known for his commentary on the Qur’ān.

172 - Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 5, p. 93.



contingencies). The answer is surely that the person must be possessed of wisdom understanding. This understanding involves an implicit interpretation of the original command. It is here that one requires a link, or a bridge, between the commands in abstract (pure form) and the act of historical application (judgement), and this link can be nothing other than the concept of wisdom (understanding). This is perhaps one of the reasons why the Qur'ān informs us in the following statement "It is He Who has sent down to you the Book. In it are Verses that are entirely clear, they are the foundations of the book, commands (*aḥkām*), obligatory duties (*ṣrā'īḍ*) and legal laws (*ḥudūd*) for the punishment, and others not entirely clear..."<sup>173</sup>

Following is another relevant verse: "And when Jesus came with (Our) clear Proofs, he said: 'I have come to you with wisdom (*ḥikma*), and in order to make clear to you some of the (points) in which you differ, therefore fear God and obey me'."<sup>174</sup> This example once again seems to support my proposition being advanced. Thus the verse says that Jesus came with 'clear proofs', which are then connected to the concept of wisdom through Jesus saying that he comes with 'wisdom', by which he will make clear some ambiguous points.

Thus the claim I am making is that the word 'book' as used in the Qur'ān signifies the revelation of God in all of its multifarious aspects, whereas 'wisdom' signifies the act of clarifying and subsequently implementing the command content of revelation, in other words exercising a judgement. By logical extension, wisdom also enables one to make judge (*ḥukm*) prudently on matters which cause differences of opinion between people: "...God has given the book and judgement (*ḥukm*)<sup>175</sup> and Prophethood ..." <sup>176</sup>

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173 - The Qur'ān, 3: 7.

174 - Ibid., 43: 63.

175 - In Arabic, term *ḥukm* means ruling, the assertion of a matter to another matter. Also it means judge's decision or his judgement in a disputed question.

176 - The Qur'ān, 3: 79.

Here '*ḥukm*' means a decision which entails immediate practical action. Therefore, wisdom is something concerning the practical aspect of life, rather than the theoretical or speculative. Wisdom facilitates an authentic explanation and application of divine revelation, the establishment of conclusions on which judgement (*ḥukm*) can be exercised. Thus the Prophet Abraham said; "My Lord! Bestow, right judgement (*ḥukm* or *ḥikma*) on me, and join me with the righteous; and grant me an honourable mention in later generations."<sup>177</sup>

Shāfi'ī displays a similar understanding in his book *Risāla*, in which he links the concepts of Sunna and *ḥikma*; "The Sunna of the Apostle makes evident what God meant (in the text of His Book), indicating His general and particular [commands]. He associated the wisdom embodied in the Sunna with his Book, but made it subordinate (to the book). Never has God done this for any of His creatures save His Apostle."<sup>178</sup>

#### 4- Wisdom, kingdom and sound judgement:

The term 'book and wisdom' (*ḥikma*) is also connected with the concept of 'kingdom' (*mulk*)<sup>179</sup> and "sound judgement in speech". The following verses indicate that the ultimate purpose to which the 'book and wisdom' are directed can be seen in the concepts of 'kingdom' and "sound judgement". Thus the Qur'ān states:

"...then we had already given the family of Abraham the book and wisdom (*ḥikma*) and conferred upon them a great kingdom (*mulk*)."<sup>180</sup>

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177 - Ibid., 26: 83, 84.

178 - Shāfi'ī, *Risāla*, p. 112.

179 - The Arabic concept *mulk* (government or kingdom) here means power on government. However, it is not relate to well-known concept of 'monarchism'. Because kingdom was not officially assumed by Muslim rulers. The Prophets as leaders, rould out their governments or nations by the consensus of civil representative.

180 - The Qur'ān, 4: 54.



“So they routed them by God’s leave and David killed Goliath, and God gave him (David) the kingdom and wisdom, and taught him of that which He willed...”<sup>181</sup>

“We made his (David) kingdom strong and gave him wisdom and sound judgement in speech and decision.”<sup>182</sup>

These verses make a clear connection between the concepts of ‘wisdom’, ‘kingdom’, and knowledge of wisdom, practically manifested as sound judgement. Thus, once again, the Qur’ān appears to affirm a conceptual understanding of wisdom (*hikma*) as the applicator dimension of the divine laws.

Thus the power which resides in any politically distinct, and administratively organised, community (kingdom), is the ideal stage for the ruler endowed with wisdom to commence an historical implementation of the divine commands within the context of this living community.<sup>183</sup> The Qur’anic account of David demonstrates this point; “God commands that you (David) should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. He gives you! Truly, God is ever all-hearer, all-seer.”<sup>184</sup> If we consider this last verse together with the verses which speak of David’s God given wisdom, then it would seem reasonable to assert that the attributes which constituted David’s character had their source in this revealed wisdom.

Other verses of the Qur’ān lend more weight to the idea that the revealed commands of revelation should be applied in a socio-political context through the mediator power of wisdom.

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181 - Ibid., 2: 251.

182 - Ibid., 38: 20.

183 - Here we can remember that Plato also claimed that unless rulers are chosen among the wise people or wise people become king the justice cannot be established in a state.

184 - Ibid., 4: 58.

“...We gave him (Joseph) wisdom (*ḥukm*) and knowledge, thus we reward the doers of good...”<sup>185</sup> “We made his (David) kingdom strong and gave him wisdom and sound judgement in speech and decision.”<sup>186</sup>

The Qur’ān also mentions the ancient Israeli judge Luqmān,<sup>187</sup> who applied the Divine commands through wisdom. The Qur’ān indicates him to have been a pious man. “And indeed We bestowed upon Luqmān wisdom (*ḥikma*) saying: Give thanks to God...”<sup>188</sup>

The Qur’ān mentions that some of the prophets were given both the “book and wisdom”, while others were given only wisdom such as Luqmān, and Joseph who possessed wisdom but came with no revealed book. These prophets utilised previous revelation, or a legal system current at the time. For instance, the Qur’ān relates that Joseph ruled Egypt according to the King’s law<sup>189</sup> rather than a Divine Law.

## 5- Wisdom and goodness:

The Qur’ān also links the bestowment of wisdom (*ḥikma*) to the concept of goodness; “He grants wisdom (*ḥikma*) to whom He pleases, and he, to whom

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185 - Ibid., 12: 22.

186 - Ibid., 2: 251.

187 - According to historical tradition, he was an emancipated slave who was a contemporary of Dāwūd and lived in Abyssinia or Sudan. It is known that he was one of the religious, moral and social guides. (Siddiqi, Who is Who in the Qur’ān, p,121). Also in his ḥadīth collection Muwaṭṭa’, Imām Mālik related that it reached him that Luqmān the wise, before his death, advised his son saying: “O my dear son, associate with the learned and sit respectfully in their presence for God gives life to the heart by the light of His wisdom, as he revives the dead earth by giving rain from the firmament. (Muwaṭṭa’, by Imām Mālik, Chapter 59, (The Book of Knowledge), ḥadīth no: 505.

188 - The Qur’ān, 31: 12.

189 - Ibid., 12: 76. “...He could not take his brother by the law of the king, except that God willed it...”



wisdom (*ḥikma*) is granted, is indeed granted abundant good. But none remember except men of understanding.”<sup>190</sup>

“...We gave him (Joseph) wisdom (*ḥikma*) and knowledge, thus We reward the doers of good...”<sup>191</sup>

#### 6- Wisdom as giving thanks to Allah:

The Qur’ān intimates that the person endowed with true wisdom will always be disposed to be thankful for this unquantifiable gift; “And indeed We bestowed upon Luqmān wisdom (*ḥikma*) saying: ‘ Give thanks to God,’ and whoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for his own...”<sup>192</sup>

#### 7- Wisdom as the method of invitation:

Wisdom is also postulated as a central constitutive element in the process of calling to Islam (*da‘wa*). The purpose of *da‘wa* is identified with the notion of showing one’s fellow human beings a framework for living which is clearly recognisable as a ‘better way’. “Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better...”<sup>193</sup>

The above sections indicate clearly that the concept of wisdom as understood in the Qur’ān relates to the active or applicatory dimension of the Divine revelation. As a corollary, the leader or government becomes the institutionalised locus wherein the effective power necessary to administer justice, and applied through recourse to wisdom, is made a historical actuality. Thus, the application of the revealed law in the context of a living community requires the active presence of wisdom (*ḥikma*).

It is interesting to note that all of the terms employed by the Qur’ān in connection with wisdom carry implications of practical usage through correct understanding. Thus, ‘book’, ‘kingdom’, ‘knowledge’, ‘Torah’ ‘Gospel’, ‘Sign’ (Qur’ān) and

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190 - Ibid., 2: 269.

191 - Ibid., 12: 22.

192 - Ibid., 31: 12.

193 - Ibid., 16: 125.

'prophethood' (*risalāt*) all require a practical method of application through correct knowledge (in the Qur'ān as wisdom). For Muslims without this dynamic applicatory dimension, the divine law will become ossified and obsolete, unable to engage constructively with changing societies.

For those who accept as legitimate the concept of divine revelation, it is not reasonable to suppose that God should send down his Message and Commands without providing the rules and framework for applying it. If God sent down a scripture without the mediator role of the prophets, it would be almost impossible to apply as there would exist no living example from amongst human beings themselves of how such guidance was to be made accessible to daily life.

#### B- QUR'ANIC CONCEPT OF WISDOM AS THE BALANCED WAY:

In this section I will analyse chapter (*sūra*)<sup>194</sup> seventeen of the Qur'ān, called 'Isrā' (The Night Journey). This chapter contains thirty important verses from the viewpoint of this study (verses 9-39), as from them the main characteristic of Islamic wisdom (*ḥikma*) can be deduced.

The section of this chapter which deals with wisdom begins with the following admonitions: "Verily, this Qur'ān guides to that which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward (Paradise). And that those who believe not in the Hereafter, for them We have prepared a painful torment (Hell)."<sup>195</sup>

In this chapter the 'Isrā' the Qur'ān expounds the bases of morality and civilised behaviour, and then finish by referring to them as an aspect of wisdom.<sup>196</sup> "This is (part) of wisdom (*ḥikma*) which Your Lord has inspired to you. And set not up with God any other god (*'ilāh*) lest you should be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and rejected."<sup>197</sup>

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194 - A section or chapter of the Qur'ān. Also refers to a unit of revelation.

195 - The Qur'ān, 17: 9, 10.

196 - Nadwi, A Guide Book for Muslims, p.136.

197 - The Qur'ān, 17: 39.



A general outline chapter 'Isrā' can be discerned. The first part, containing eight verses, relates the event of the Prophet Muḥammad's night journey and ascension (*al- 'Isrā' wa-l-mi'rā*) from Mecca to the holy city of Jerusalem,<sup>198</sup> and then continues with story of the Children of Israel. Here the parallels between the Prophet Muḥammad's night journey, and Moses' Journey to the mountain Tūr Sīnā on which the 'Ten Commandments' were revealed, becomes evident.

The thematic pattern with the citing some examples of wise behaviour, and how to achieve them finishes by stating: "This is (part) of wisdom (*ḥikma*) which your Lord has inspired to you (O Muḥammad)"<sup>199</sup> Now it is my contention that this linguistic device, utilised elsewhere in the Qur'ān with similar formulas such as *this is...* or *that is...* is used to direct the reader to those verses which have immediately preceded this juncture. Thus when one encounters this linguistic device, it should be taken as a suggestion to go back either to the beginning of the paragraph, or the beginning of that part of the chapter.

All of the verses preceding up to verse 39 in this particular chapter of the Qur'ān, gives various examples of wisdom as the final verses. I have quoted all these verses because of their importance in explaining the basic characteristics of wisdom. For this reason, I am going to examine that part of Chapter 'Isrā' from which it may be possible to ascertain some of the key characteristics of wisdom, and forward a tentative definition.

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198 - Some time before the Hijra, the prophet experienced a Night Journey. According to the tradition one night he was sleeping in the sanctuary next to the Ka'bah, when the Angel Gabriel woke him and led him to a beast called the Burāq, "smaller than a mule but larger than an ass", by which the Prophet was borne through the sky to Jerusalem where, with the Prophets, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others, he prayed at the site of the Temple of Solomon. From there the Prophet rose to heaven and there the Prophet received the command from God that men should perform the prayer five times each day. (See, The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Grill Glassé p. 301, 302).

199 - The Qur'ān, 17: 39.

Verily, this Qur'ān guides to that which is most just and right and gives glad tidings to the believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a great reward (Paradise). (9)<sup>200</sup>

And that those who believe not in the Hereafter, for them We have prepared a painful torment (Hell). (10)

And man invokes (God) for evil as he invokes (God) for good and man is ever hasty. (11)

And We have appointed the night and day as two signs. Then, We have extinguished the sign of the night while We have made the sign of day bright, that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the number of the years and the reckoning. And We have explained everything with full explanation. (12)

And We have fastened every man's deeds to his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open. (13)

(It will be said to him): "Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a reckoned against you this day." (14)

Whoever goes right, than he goes right only for the benefit of his own self. And whoever goes astray, then he goes astray to his own loss. No one laden with burdens can bear another burden. And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger.(15)

And when We decide to destroy a town (population), We (first) send a definite order (to obey God and be righteous) to those among them who are given the good things of this life. Then, they transgress therein, and thus the word is justified against it (them). Then We destroy it with complete destruction. (16)

And how many generations (past nations) have We destroyed after Noah! And Sufficient is your Lord as an All-Knower and Beholder of the sins of His slaves. (17)

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200 - The numbers in bracket end of the paragraphs show the original verse number of Chapter.



Whoever wishes for the quick-passing, We readily grant him what We will for whom We like. Then afterwards, We have appointed for him Hell, he will burn therein disgraced and rejected, (-far away from God's Mercy). (18)

And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it, with the necessary effort due for it while he is a believer, then such are the ones whose striving shall be appreciated, thanked and rewarded (by God). (19)

To each We bestow from the Bounties of your Lord. And the Bounties of your Lord can never be forbidden. (20)

See how We prefer one above another and verily, the Hereafter will be greater in degrees and greater in preference. (21)

Set not up with God any other god (*'ilāh*), (O man)! (This verse is addressed to Prophet Muḥammad but its implication is general to all mankind), or you will sit down reproved, forsaken (in the Hell-Fire). (22)

And your lord has decreed that you worship none but him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. (23)

And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small." (24)

Your Lord knows best what is in your inner-selves. If you are righteous, then, verily, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance. (25)

And give to the kindred his due and to the *mission* (poor who beg) and to the wayfarer. But spend not wastefully in the manner of a spendthrift. (26)

Verily, spendthrifts are brothers of the devils, and the Devil (Satan) is ever ungrateful to his Lord. (27)

And if you (O Muḥammad) turn away from them and you are awaiting a mercy from your Lord for which you hope, then, speak unto them a soft kind word. (28)

And let not your hand be tied to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty. (29)

Truly, your lord enlarges the provision for whom He wills and straitens. Verily, He is ever All-Knower, All-Scer of His slaves. (30)

And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Surely, the killing of them is a great sin. (31)

And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a bad action (*fāḥisha*). and an evil way. (32)

And do not kill anyone which God has forbidden, except for a just cause. And whoever is killed, We have given his heir the authority. But let him not exceed limits in the matter of taking life. Verily, he is helped. (33)

And come not near to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength. And fulfil (every) covenant. Verily! the covenant, will be questioned about.(34)

And give full measure when you measure, and weight with a balance that is straight. That is good and better in the end. (35)

And follow not that of which you have no knowledge. Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned (by God). (36)

And walk not on the earth with conceit and arrogance. Verily, you can neither rend nor penetrate the earth, nor can you attain a stature like the mountains in height.(37)

All the bad aspects of these are hateful in the Sight of your Lord. (38)



This is (part) of wisdom (*ḥikma*) which Your Lord has inspired to you. And set not up with God any other *'ilāh* (god) lest you should be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and rejected.” (39)<sup>201</sup>

These verses illustrate the main characteristics of wisdom, and the ways in which they are applicable to all human communities. The principles are similar to those contained in the Decalogue (Ten Commandments). Despite the similarities, the Qur'ān does unmistakably lay greater stress on those aspects concerned with the instruction and purification of human beings, in order to prepare them to accept human responsibilities and apply the Divine law. In this respect the Qur'ān gives a balanced instruction on four main Islamic concepts; religion (belief), ethics, law and daily experiential wisdom.

## 1- Religion:

a-The basis of Islamic wisdom is belief in God and His attributes:

-None should be worshipped except Him.<sup>202</sup> (*La 'ilāha illallāh*)

-God has prepared a punishment for those who reject belief in the Hereafter (*ākhirah*).<sup>203</sup>

-God does not apply the full punishment to any community to whom he has not sent a messenger.<sup>204</sup>

-God is most forgiving to those who turn to Him with repentance (*tawba*).<sup>205</sup>

-God knowledge is absolute, is All-Knower (*'ālim*), and All-Scer of His slaves (*baṣīr*).<sup>206</sup>

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201 - The Qur'ān, 17: 9-39.

202 - Ibid., 17: 12.

203 - Ibid., 17: 10.

204 - Ibid., 17: 15.

205 - Ibid., 17: 25.

206 - Ibid., 17: 30.

-None shall be held responsible for another persons sins, and by extension none shall be able to intercede for another on judgement day.<sup>207</sup>

Like other Islamic concepts, wisdom has been constructed on the unalterable, fundamental beliefs, the most important of which are believing in God and the Day of Judgement. However, the above concepts indicate that it is not enough to simply profess belief in God, but that one should associate nothing with him ( and this, of course, can only be practised through ones existential experience). In addition to this, one is required to believe in his justice and forgiveness.

b- Life and property are from God: Another important aspect of wisdom involves acknowledging that the gifts of life and property (*māl*) are from God alone. Thus one who is in constant awareness of the miraculous nature of his existence, cannot be dominated by mundane desires and earthly wishes. Let us give a few examples from Chapter 'Isrā' which deal with these points.

-Whoever wishes this world and whoever desires the hereafter, God gives them what they desired.<sup>208</sup>

-God enlarges the provision for whom He wills.<sup>209</sup>

-The killing of children for fear of poverty is a great sin because God will provide in these situations.<sup>210</sup>

Also, the prophet Muḥammad, in a *ḥadīth* said; "Avoid the seven destructive things: idolatry; sorcery; killing a person declared inviolable by God, except for a just reason; profiteering; consuming the property of an orphan; think back when it is time to advance and defaming chaste believing woman who happen to be careless."<sup>211</sup>

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207 - Ibid., 17: 15.

208 - Ibid., 17: 18.

209 - Ibid., 17: 30.

210 - Ibid., 17: 31.

211 - Cleary, The Wisdom of Prophet, p. 106,107.



## 2- Ethics:

a- The golden middle way<sup>212</sup> as balanced behaviour: The Qur'ān (quote) informs the Muslims that they have been appointed by God to be a living example of the 'middle way'. Accordingly, God has sent the 'book and wisdom', which is the means to fulfilling this role. This concept of the middle way rules out, by definition any forms of behaviour which exhibit extremist tendencies, as the following verse signals.

-Do not spend wastefully and do not be tied to your neck as a miser.<sup>213</sup>

-If one is killed, God has given his heir the authority. But let him not exceed limits in the matter of taking life.<sup>214</sup>

In his book *Public Policy in Islamic jurisprudence*, Ibn Taymiya attempted a summary of this concept of the 'middle way'; "The middle way, that is the exercise of authority to establish Religion and world order is the way of those on whom God has bestowed favours from among the prophets, the truthful, the faithful and the righteous, which is the way of the Prophet Muḥammad, as well as the way of his successors."<sup>215</sup>

b- To practice kindness with others is one of the ethical foundations for Islamic wisdom: The Qur'ān issues commands to Muslims in other areas, stating that one should be kind towards others with whom Muslims share their lives, including parents, neighbours and orphans. In relation to this form of behaviour, humility may be pinpointed as one of the foundations of Islamic ethics.

-Do not be disrespectful to parents, in action or speech.<sup>216</sup>

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212 - A philosophical term that indicates balanced behaviours between any two extremist ethical behaviours or attitudes.

213 - The Qur'ān, 17: 26.

214 - Ibid., 17: 33.

215 - Taymiya, Ibn Taymiya on Public and Private Law in Islam, by Dr. Omar A. Farrukh, p. 192.

216 - The Qur'ān, 17: 23.

-Walk not on the earth with conceit and arrogance.<sup>217</sup>

-God commands that human beings should give to the kindred his due and to the poor and to the wayfarer.<sup>218</sup>

If you are not able to help them, speak unto them a soft, kind word.<sup>219</sup>

-Fulfil (every) covenant.<sup>220</sup>

-Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight.<sup>221</sup>

### 3- Law:

a- The Qur'ān is a guide (*tibyān*) in all things: The foundation of wisdom is textual; In this respect the Qur'ān is the normative foundation for wisdom. The Qur'ān itself alludes to this in Chapter 'Isrā', linking the concept of wisdom with the concept of 'book', as in the phrase "book and wisdom". For the believers the Qur'ān is a guide for this world and the hereafter.<sup>222</sup>

b- The limitations concerning unlawful things (*ḥarām*): The laws of prohibition, like most other laws stipulated in the Qur'ān, are first justified in the form of a reminder which focuses on the underlying reasons for the command, rather than simply giving the command. The following examples highlight some of the responsibilities which are incumbent on all Muslims. They are not only to do lawful deeds, but also to avoid that which is unlawful. Thus, part of Sūra al-'Isrā' gives examples of unlawful deeds or actions which are to be avoided.

-And do not kill anyone which God has forbidden, except for a just cause.<sup>223</sup>

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217 - Ibid., 17: 26.

218 - Ibid., 17: 26.

219 - Ibid., 17: 28.

220 - Ibid., 17: 34.

221 - Ibid., 17: 35.

222 - Ibid., 17: 9.

223 - Ibid., 17: 33.



-And come not near to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength.<sup>224</sup>

-And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a evil (*fāḥisha*), and an evil way.<sup>225</sup>

We can observe from these verses that in Islam it is forbidden to embark on a pattern of behaviour which will bring one close to that which is unlawful, just as much as it is to commit the act itself. In Islamic jurisprudence, to argue this point, Muslim jurists developed a concept within the overall framework of jurisprudence called *Sadd al-dharā'i'*.

To clarify this, let me give the example of traffic signs. Normally, these signs are not placed just in front of what they want to indicate. They are usually placed somewhere before as a warning. For instance the signs indicating an oncoming zebra crossing occur well in advance of the actual crossing point itself. Similarly, in Islam it is forbidden to come near this line. Therefore, Muslims should not come close to the forbidden action (*ḥarām*). In other words, Muslims should be ready to protect themselves from bad actions by the knowledge of wisdom. One could also compare this area to the idea of preventative medicine (closing the gates to that which is forbidden), which is surely preferable to having to administer the cure (*ḥadd*).

The verses cited also offer instances where the general command may be neutralised;

-Come not near to the orphan's property except to improve it...<sup>226</sup>

-Do not kill anyone which God has forbidden, except for a just cause.<sup>227</sup>

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224 - Ibid., 17: 34.

225 - Ibid., 17: 32.

226 - Ibid., 17: 32.

227 - Ibid., 17: 33.

These exception clauses demonstrate the element of wisdom, and imparts to the divine command system its dynamism and adaptability.

#### 4-Natural Wisdom as a Result of Daily Experience:

Also in the above quoted section of the Qur'ān, Muslims are commanded to learn from the wisdom which is present in their everyday existential experience, through their observance of the surrounding nature and cosmos. For this reason, the Qur'ān points to universally experienced phenomena such as day and night, sky, wind, clouds and stars, and admonishes humanity to understand their harmony and the greater reality which lies behind them.

Day and night have been appointed as two signs by which humans may seek bounty from your Lord and may know the number of the years as well as the reckoning.<sup>228</sup>

“Verily!, In the creation of the heaven and the earth, and on the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the rain which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He scatters therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed *āyāt* (proofs, evidences, signs) for people of understanding.”<sup>229</sup>

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in touching on this subject, argued that wisdom is a kind of perfect good which empowers a Muslim to hear the song of the birds, the smell of the perfume, and of the sound and breath of the beloved.<sup>230</sup> Wisdom as understood in this way refers to a kind of base which includes the whole meaning of life and is inclusive of the remarkable discoveries obtained through the medium of science and art as a result of daily experience.

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228 - Ibid., 17: 12.

229 - Ibid., 2: 164.

230 - Nasr, *The Need for a Sacred Science*, p. 12, 13.



## Conclusion:

The present chapter has taken as its base the important Qur'anic observation that some prophets received both "book and wisdom", such as Moses (Mūsā), Jesus (ʿĪsā) and Muḥammad, while others, such as Luqmān and Joseph (Yūsuf), received only wisdom or knowledge. Thus it was through wisdom that this latter group of Prophets applied the injunctions contained in previous prophetic books. This example shows that an important aspect of wisdom relates to the applicatory dimension of the Divine revelation.

Under the second sub-heading of this chapter, using selected verses from Sūra seventeen of the Qur'ān, I highlighted the place of wisdom and its importance as a balancing factor between the four key conceptual areas; religion, ethics, law and daily experience. This chapter of the Qur'ān appears to confirm the view that wisdom has a dynamic power to unite these four categories.

Therefore it may be said that wisdom is manifest when the instructive content of these spheres are being practised in a balanced way. Thus any evil or bad action or inducement in this direction cannot continue in a sustained form when religion, ethics, law and daily experience, are fully operative. However, Islamic wisdom as a balanced way of life cannot be grasped without a thorough knowledge of the Prophet Muḥammad's life and actions viewed in conjunction with the Qur'anic revelation.

## CHAPTER IV

### WISDOM (*HIKMA*) OF THE PROPHET

#### Introduction:

In the previous chapter I concluded that the word 'book' represents the revealed commands, while 'wisdom' represents the method of application of the revealed message. Thus it is legitimate to speak of two aspects of revealed knowledge; the 'book' represents the Divine message in its direct and immutable textual form and 'wisdom' represents a sound judgement and practice of this knowledge through the Prophet himself in everyday human affairs. Therefore Islamic wisdom cannot be grasped without first knowing the Prophet Muḥammad's life and actions, viewed in conjunction with the Qur'anic revelation.

#### A- CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

##### 1- The Islamic concept of Sunna and wisdom:

According to the Qur'ān, Muslims should obey the Prophet's practice because it complements the guidance of the book of God. "He who obeys the Messenger, has indeed obeyed God (himself)..."<sup>231</sup> "O, you who believe! Obey God, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to God and His Messenger if you believe in God and the Last Day. That is the best and most suitable for final determination."<sup>232</sup>

Therefore, it is clear that Muslims should take their references from both the Qur'ān and the Prophet's Sunna as an explanation and application of Divine commands. For this reason the Qur'ān says that the Prophet's way of life is as binding as the Qur'ān. Shāfi'ī in his book *Risāla* comments: "For he who accepts (a duty) on

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231 - The Qur'ān, 4: 80.

232 - Ibid., 4: 59.



the authority of the Prophet accepts it from God, since God has imposed the obligation to obey (the Prophet).”<sup>233</sup>

Although Imām Shāfi’ī claimed that wisdom and Sunna are identical, there are some points where this view becomes problematic. I think it would be more accurate to say that since wisdom represents the applicatory dimension of the Qur’anic revelation, it can be better understood through the Sunna, which is the example *par excellence* of applying the divine guidelines. Therefore, wisdom cannot be understood without the foundational framework of the Qur’ān, and examining the detail of the Sunna of the Prophet.

To explain the relationship between the concept of Islamic wisdom and the Sunna, one should think of an iceberg as an analogy. The part of the iceberg which is above the water level (which for the purposes of this analogy represents the limit of human sense perception), resembles the Sunna, which is the visible part of wisdom. However, the main body of the iceberg remains hidden underneath the water.

Therefore, wisdom as the applicatory dimension of the Qur’anic revelation is of the same substance as the Sunna. However, the Divine wisdom dimension is not amenable in its full extent to human perception. It is not something to which boundaries can be easily ascribed, as these would simply reflect human beings’ limited understanding. Therefore to say that the Sunna is of the same substance as wisdom is not to say that it is identical with wisdom, but rather that it represents a major manifestation of this substance within the human dimension. It does not, however, completely exhaust that dimension which we call wisdom, as this in its totality is beyond our comprehension. It follows from this that to attempt to gain a greater understanding of wisdom in its totality, one must look at the Sunna or way of life of the prophets, as if it were a mirror, which reflects the source from which it came.

According to some Muslim scholars, including Shāṭibī (d. 1388),<sup>234</sup> the Sunna is the explanation of the Qur’ān. The Prophet, just before dying, said; “I have left

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233 - Shāfi’ī, *Risāla*, p. 76.

nothing concerning which God has given you an order without giving you that order; nor have I neglected anything concerning which He has given you a prohibition without giving you that prohibition.”<sup>235</sup>

Therefore, the Qur’ān gives broad or essential principles of religion, and the Prophet provides the details by his example. The Prophet Muḥammad left behind him a good example of the Qur’ān through his behaviour and advice on which wisdom can be defined. Thus, to understand Islamic wisdom, one should first know the Sunna and its subdivisions, such as the chronology of the Prophet (*sīra*) and his sayings (*ḥadīth*). In addition to these, one also should study the understanding and applications of the companions (*ṣaḥāba*). The Qur’ān itself uses the expression ‘book and wisdom’, and in line with the analysis so far conducted I am suggesting that this can be taken in place of ‘Book and Sunna’.

## 2- The divine origin of wisdom:

In the Qur’ān, it is stated that God makes contact with humankind in three different ways. “It is not given to any human being that God should speak to him unless (it be) by Inspiration, or from behind a veil, or (that) He sends a Messenger to reveal what He wills by His Leave. Verily, He is most High, most Wise.”<sup>236</sup>

From this verse, Muslim scholars have concluded that revelation is not limited to the form of Messengership, but also includes the two other ways here stated. Therefore, the Prophet may have received some guidance besides the Qur’ān, through revelation from God. According to Mawdūdī, God provided the example and guidance of the Prophet, as a practical divine revelation in addition to the Qur’ān.<sup>237</sup> In the following verses we read “It is He who has sent His Messenger

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234 - Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Lakhmī al-Ghranāfī, known as Shāḥibī (d. 1388). A famous scholar in Uṣūl al-Fiqh from Granada, Andalusia. He was a leader in the Mālikī school. Among his books are: *Muwāfaqāt*, *I’tiṣām*, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī’a*.

235 - Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, Cairo, 1374 (1954), vol. 9, p. 199-201; Bayḍāwī, *Tafsīr*, Cairo, 1371 (1955), p. 126-27; Quoted from *Risāla*, by Shāfi’ī, p. 118.

236 - The Qur’ān, 42: 51.

237 - Mawdūdī, *Tafhīmāt*, p. 335.



with Guidance and the religion of truth, to make it superior over all religions...”<sup>238</sup>

In the Qur’ān, there are a few examples in which the actions of the Prophet were criticised. For example, when the Prophet asked forgiveness for his uncle Abū Ṭālib (d. 619)<sup>239</sup> he was corrected by the following verses: “It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask God’s forgiveness for the polytheists even though they be of kin...”<sup>240</sup> Because forgiveness is described in the Qur’ān as the supreme wisdom of life, it can only be the fruit of sincere repentance.<sup>241</sup>

The Prophet was also corrected for his impatient treatment of a blind man who came to ask him a question while he was busy with some of the Quraysh<sup>242</sup> chiefs. The Qur’ān comments on this, stating the following: “He (The Prophet) frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man (‘Abdullāh b. Umm-Maktūm) but what could tell you that per chance he might become pure (from sins). Or that he might receive admonition, and that the admonition might profit him. As for him who thinks himself self sufficient, to him you attend; what does it matter to you if he will not become pure. But as to him who came to you running. And he is afraid (from God), Of him you are neglectful and divert your attention to another, Nay, (do not do like this)...”<sup>243</sup>

In these verses the Qur’ān appears to affirm the wisdom of the prophet in an indirect way. When the Prophet committed an error, he was corrected through the Qur’anic revelation. As a result of this understanding, Muslims believe that whatever the

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238 - The Qur’ān, 9: 33.

239 - Son of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim and Fāṭima bint ‘Amr, and full brother of the Prophet Muḥammad’s father. When ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib the grandfather of Muḥammad died, Abū Ṭālib continued to protect the Prophet Muḥammad till he died in 619. (See Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 1, pp. 152-b, 153-a).

240 - The Qur’ān, 9: 113.

241 - Katircioglu, The wisdom of the Qur’ān, p. xix.

242 - Tribe inhabiting Mecca in the time of the Prophet and to which he belonged.

243 - The Qur’ān, 80: 1-11.

Prophet did or commanded regarding religion is correct unless otherwise explicitly stated in the Qur'ān.

Since the Prophet derived his authority from God's will, this charismatic authority is a reflection of God rather than the Prophet Muḥammad's own supremacy over Muslims.<sup>244</sup> For this reason the Prophet Muḥammad stated that he knew little other than that which was revealed to him.<sup>245</sup>

However, Muslims have often held to the view that, although the Prophet's own judgement (*ijtihād*) was not always based on any textual evidence, they could nevertheless not be thought to be wrong since the Prophet could have received divine guidance,<sup>246</sup> either through inspiration or in an indirect way. Thus, by this way the Prophet was protected from error by God.

Without the Prophetic wisdom (*ḥikma*) it would be difficult for a Muslim to understand many points in the Qur'ān. The mission of the Prophet is extremely important in setting up two foundation stones; ethical modality and instructional mode or purification. These are the main objectives of Islam and represents the practical face of the Qur'ān which we call as 'wisdom'.

## B- ETHICAL MODALITY OF THE PROPHET

In the Qur'ān ethics can be seen as the essence of Islamic wisdom. But it is also important to add that ethics cannot be learned or be taken from a text alone, since it deals with the practical issues in human life.

If we look at the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, all of his good characteristics and abilities can be viewed as the practical model. The Qur'ān expresses this reality by stating the following: "And verily, you (O Muḥammad) are on an exalted standard of character."<sup>247</sup> In one of his traditions, the Prophet said "I have been

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244 - Dabashi, Authority in Islam, p. 60.

245 - Ibn Ishaq, Sīrat Rasūlullāh, vol. 2, p. 149-150, (Quoted, Muhammedi Sunnetin Ihyasi, by Abu Reyze, Istanbul 1986 (Turkish).

246 - Mawdūdī, Tashīmāt, 335.

247 - The Qur'ān, 68: 4.



sent to carry the moral to perfection.”<sup>248</sup> The other tradition stresses that “The character of Islam is modesty.”<sup>249</sup> In the interpretation of this tradition, Badī’ al-Zamān Sa’īd al-Nursī (1876-1960)<sup>250</sup> stated that the Prophet was sent to mankind by Almighty God in order to complete an important instance of wisdom, to perfect good conduct, morals and virtues, and to deliver mankind from immorality and vice.<sup>251</sup> In his book *Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, Ṭabarī (c. 839-923)<sup>252</sup> made the same point, stating that the Prophet taught both the Qur’ān and its application in the life of Muslims.<sup>253</sup>

To exemplify this ethical structure the Prophet was chosen by God as a human example (*uswā*) to follow.<sup>254</sup> The *uswā*, or example of the Prophet, was later interpreted as Sunna. Most of the ethical characteristics such as sincerity, awe of God, preference of the hereafter over this world, steadfastness, modesty, humility, moderation, courage and many other inner dimensions of ethical attitudes and behaviours, cannot be learnt without a particular model in a community.<sup>255</sup> Therefore in order to appreciate Islamic wisdom, one needs to have a sound knowledge of the particular occasion which accompanied a particular Qur’anic verse (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) together with the life of the Prophet. This chronology also needs the support and analysis of the other Islamic sciences, such as the

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248 - Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa’*, Chapter: 47 (The Book of Good Character), ḥadīth no: 8, p. 438.

249 - *Ibid*, ḥadīth no: 9, p. 438.

250 - Religious leader of Kurdish origin, in late Ottoman and Republican Turkey. He is the author of *Risāle-i Nūr* (Epistles of Light, or wisdom) from which the intellectual-religious movement known as *Nurculuk* sprang; he was born in the Village of Nurs in the province of Bitlis in eastern Turkey. (See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, vol. 8, p. 143).

251 - Nursī, *The Damascus Sermon*, p. 12.

252 - Abu Ja’far Muḥammad b. Jarīr, the Arab historian, was born probably in 839 at Āmul in the province of Ṭabaristān. He died in 923.

253 - Ṭabarī, *The Commentary on the Qur’ān (Jāmi’ al-Bayān)* by W. F. Madelung, vol. 1, p. 40.

254 - Another title of the Prophet in Islamic tradition is “*Khayra Khalqillāh*” (The best of God’s creation).

255 - Nadwi, *A Guidebook for Muslims*, p. 138.

interpretation (*tafsīr*) of the Qur'ān, the biographies of the companions, and insight into Islamic history.

### 1- Faith and ethics:

The Prophet Muḥammad first instructed his companions in matters of faith (*īmān*) and ethics or moral character, in preparation for Islamic law and obligatory duties. The Prophet's moral instructions for Muslims were not his own, but were in keeping with the revelations of the Qur'ān. Once, when 'Ā'isha<sup>256</sup> was asked about the morals of the Prophet, she replied: "If you want to know of his morals, see the Qur'ān"<sup>257</sup>

If we look at the chronological order of the Qur'ān we can easily see that God did not order Muslims to follow the complete Islamic obligatory duties (*Sharī'a*) before completing their ethical education. For instance, fasting, *ḥajj*<sup>258</sup>, tax (*zakāt*)<sup>259</sup> and the other major commands and prohibitions (*ḥarām*)<sup>260</sup> were not introduced at the beginning of Qur'anic revelation. Before the above mentioned obligations, the Prophet taught the following ethical commands according to the chronological order of the Qur'ān.<sup>261</sup>

Treat not the orphan with oppression.<sup>262</sup>

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256 - 'Ā'isha, bint Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq 'Abdullāh b. 'Uthmān, Umm 'Abdullāh (613-678). The third and favourite wife of the Prophet Muḥammad was born at Mecca. She was most knowledgeable Muslim woman in law and literature of her time. The Prophet married her during the second year after Hijra. She transmitted 2210 ḥadīth from the Prophet. She died in Madina.

257 - Ḥanbal, Aḥmad Ibn, Musnad, Bāqī Musnad al-Ansār, ḥadīth no: 23460, quoted from Mawsu'al ḥadīth (cd-rom), by Sharikat al-Sakhr li Baramij al-Hisab, First Edition: Egypt, 1991-1995.

258 - Arabic term for the pilgrimage. It is one of the five pillars of Islam, a pilgrimage to Mecca is obligatory on every Muslim who can afford it at least one in his/her life time.

259 - The alms-tax, one of the five principal obligations of Islam.

260 - Forbidden by the sacred law. The opposite of it is ḥalāl which means anything not forbidden.

261 - Islamoglu, Yahudilesme Temayulu (The tendency of Judaism), p. 134. (Turkish)

262 - The Qur'ān, 93: 9.



Repulse not the beggar.<sup>263</sup>

Those who give (charity) with the hearts full of compassion are to be rewarded by God.<sup>264</sup>

Those who turn away from vain talk { (*laghw*) are praised by God}.<sup>265</sup>

Those who are faithfully true to their trusts and to their covenants (will be rewarded).<sup>266</sup>

Those who fulfil the covenant of God and break not the (*mīthāq*) are also to be rewarded.<sup>267</sup>

Those who repel evil with good deeds...<sup>268</sup>

Other examples for this kind of ethical foundation can be seen frequently in the Qur'anic verses such as the following; "...righteous (*birr*) the one who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to the poor who beg, and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, and offer the prayers perfectly, and gives the *zakāt*, and who fulfil their covenant when they make it, ..."<sup>269</sup>

As can be seen in the above Qur'anic verses, the characteristics of a Muslim contain simultaneously the chronological development of Islamic commands, faith, and ethics. Wisdom as a framework for the application of Islam has two bases; these are faith (*īmān*) and ethics (*akhlāq*). The revealed order of the Qur'ān is summarised as

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263 - Ibid., 93: 10.

264 - Ibid., 23: 60.

265 - Ibid., 23: 3.

266 - Ibid., 23: 8.

267 - Ibid., 13: 20.

268 - Ibid., 13: 22.

269 - Ibid., 2: 177.

follows; faith (*īmān*), ethics (*akhlāq*), and Islamic canonical law which includes both obligatory prayers (*‘ibādāt*) and Islamic legislation.

It appears from this that the Prophet, before receiving law commands, wanted to educate his companions in two areas in particular, faith (*īmān*) and morals (*akhlāq*). Therefore ethics is one of the most important foundations of Prophetic wisdom, both for the conduct of the individual and the community, on which religious obligations (*‘ibādāt*) and Islamic laws (*Sharī‘a*) can be built, according to the revealed wisdom.

In my view it would be inappropriate to apply Islamic law fully, if the community has not advanced sufficiently in the areas of belief and moral standards. As already mentioned, Muslims believe that the Prophet did not receive the Divine revelation alone, but also Divine wisdom from God by which one can apply and practise theoretical commands. Thus the Prophetic wisdom offers a model for both his time and later generations of Muslims, as a kind of mediator between the Divine world and this world.

## 2- Aspects of the well known behaviour of the Prophet:

The Qur’ān states; “And verily, you (O Muḥammad) are of an exalted standard of character.”<sup>270</sup> As the representative of Divine wisdom, the following examples are some of the important rules which governed the character of the Prophet of Islam.

The Prophet never returned evil with evil; rather he always forgave and forgot. He was never reported to have raised his hands against anyone save in war, nor did he strike anybody with his hands, neither a servant nor a woman. If anybody asked for something or wanted his help, he never allowed him to leave without disposing of his business, or at least comforted him with kind words. The other principal ways of the Prophet were that he always took the middle course of action when more extreme options were certainly available. He was reported neither to be extravagant nor a miser. If he disliked a request made of him, he simply ignored it and gave no reply instead of refusing the request outright.<sup>271</sup> Therefore one can see that Islamic

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270 - Ibid., 68: 4.

271 - Nadwi, A Guidebook for Muslims, pp. 140-142.



ethics teaches non-extremism as the best method for achieving that which constitutes good and happiness.<sup>272</sup>

When a bad deed is committed, the Prophet always recommended that it should be followed by a good one to remove its effect.<sup>273</sup> He put into practice this principle in his life, and in this respect his behaviour was described by his companions as follows. He was most generous, kind and truthful, clement, lenient and amiable. When people were in his charismatic presence for the first time, they would be overawed, and anybody staying with him for a while as a guest would become attached to him like an insuperable companion. The Prophet would smile on remarks which made others laugh; he expressed surprise over things which astonished others. Those who knew him closely had never met a man like him before and would not expect anyone else to be compared with him.<sup>274</sup>

Anas b. Mālik (d. 709 or 711)<sup>275</sup> reports, "I served the Prophet for ten years, and by Allah he never said to me any harsh word, and he never said to me about a thing as to why I had done that and as to why I had not done that."<sup>276</sup> One of his most humanitarian statements was that He who shows no mercy to the people, God, the Exalted and Glorious, does not show mercy to him.<sup>277</sup> However, despite some rare cases the prophet would always criticise people in an indirect way. Also, the Prophet always corrected his companions for any unseemly acts, without referring to them by name.<sup>278</sup>

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272 - Kurdi, *The Islamic State*, p. 33, 34.

273 - Nawawī, *Forty ḥadīth*, ḥadīth no: 18, p. 66.

274 - Nadwi, *A Guidebook for Muslims*, pp. 142-143.

275 - One of the most prolific traditionalist companions of Prophet Muḥammad. After the Ḥijrah his mother gave him at the age of ten to the prophet to serve him.

276 - Muslim, *Sahih*, Chapter: CMLXIV, Kitāb al-Faḍā'il, ḥadīth no: 5720, vol. 4, p. 1241.

277 - *Ibid.*, Chapter: CMLXVI, Kitāb al-Faḍā'il, ḥadīth no: 5737, vol. 4, p. 1244.

278 - Nadwi, *A Guidebook for Muslims*, p. 145.

### 3- The prophetic wisdom concerning general human rights:

The well-known speech of the Prophet Muḥammad in his farewell pilgrimage on the ninth of *Dhu'l-Hijja*<sup>279</sup> in the year 632 summarises the ethical framework of his wisdom. From this speech, we can conclude the following outline of wisdom in Islam as a recognition of total human rights. Although the wording appear to be for Muslims only, in general it may also include all humans.<sup>280</sup>

-Human life, properties and honour are sacred. When people meet their Lord He will ask them about their actions. Trust should be restored and deposited back safely to its owner.

-No one committing a crime is responsible for it but himself.

-A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. Nothing belonging to his brother is lawful for a Muslim, except what he allows.

-Any blood-revenge that took place before Islam is remitted.

-All interest (*usury*) before Islam is abolished and there should be no interest in the future.

-No oppressor should prevail.

- The man-woman relationship is based on reciprocal rights between them. The Prophet declared that men have received rights over their women and their women have certain rights over men. Women are to be respected. Even the prophet strongly stresses that if they (women) obey you should not treat them unjustly.

-The ruler should be listened to and obeyed no matter who he is, if he executes the rules contained in the Book of God.

-No will is valid for an inheritor and a will is not lawful for more than one-third of the property.

-The child belongs to the bed and for the adulterer there is stoning.

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279 - One of the months of the hijrī calendar.

280 - Nasr, Muḥammad Man of Allāh, p. 35-37.



-The book of Allah and the Sunna of the Prophet are the main sources to be followed by Muslims for guidance.

For the above outlined, the Prophet laid down in his speech the foundations of the Muslim society and also the universal rights for all individuals and nations under the protection of the Islamic state. On the subject of human rights the Prophet's main concern was with women's rights in particular. Before Islam came women had few rights in the Arab society, and they were treated like property as the integral part of the estate of the husband.<sup>281</sup> He raised the status of women and brought forth in man the spirit of love, faith and sincerity. He transformed the ignorant people of his time into a learned, honest and civilised nation.<sup>282</sup>

The Prophet is reported to have said "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his brother what he likes for himself."<sup>283</sup> In this tradition it is remarkable, believing in God (*īmān*) is followed with a statement of the importance of loving each other. Thus, to know this reality and to put it into practice in a good manner requires one to know the Islamic wisdom.

### C- WISDOM AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL MODE OF THE PROPHET

The above title contains one clear message, that, according to the Qur'anic commands and the Prophet's practical application, ethics is the second foundation stone of Islam, while the first is belief in God and the Day of Judgement. The ethical foundation was not separate from the Prophetic method of instruction. This indicates his purification of self and virtuous behaviour, which are the main objectives of Islamic wisdom.

According to Muslims, the Prophet exhibited exceptional qualities even when he was a young child. At the age of nine he was already a contemplative person, spending time alone, meditating upon the beauty of nature and the wonders of creation. Before he was chosen as a Prophet, he also exhibited purity of character, a

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281 - Khan, Islamic Jurisprudence, p. 15.

282 - Ibid., p. 11.

283 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book II, The Book of Faith, Chapter 7, ḥadīth no: 12, vol. 1, p. 19.

sense of honesty and such trustworthiness that he acquired the title amongst his contemporaries of 'the trustworthy' (*al-amīn*). Therefore, the Prophet was first chosen by God, tested, moulded and perfected, and only then sent to reform the world.<sup>284</sup>

The Prophet played an important role, both for his companions and future generations of Muslim communities. In terms of the roles he performed in his private life and in public, we can mention the following; teacher, head of a household, merchant, political and religious leader, social reformer, military commander, judge and ruler, instructing people in esoteric and exoteric knowledge. Also, he was gifted with the understanding of human nature.<sup>285</sup>

The Prophetic wisdom can be seen on various occasions, reflecting the ethical instructions of the Divine Revelation. The Qur'ān states; "With clear signs and books. And We have also sent down unto you (O Muḥammad) a reminder and the advice, that you may explain it clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought."<sup>286</sup> This confirms the view that the Qur'ān contains only general rules, the details of which are left to the Prophet.

The thoughts of Muḥammad Asad have some relevance at this point. Asad expressed the view that the Law-Giver (God) never intended the *Sharī'a* to cover in detail all of human life. Instead of this constricting framework, Asad argues for the *Sharī'a* to be seen as the set of guiding principles by which Muslims may live, and from which scholars can develop the details of law, taking account of the particularities of time and social circumstance.<sup>287</sup>

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284 - Nasr, Muḥammad Man of Allāh, p. 5-7.

285 - Ibid., p. 47.

286 - The Qur'ān, 16. 44.

287 - Asad, The Principles of State and Government in Islam, p. 12.



## 1- Wisdom as a method of invitation:

The Prophet's ability with language formed the communicative basis of the call to Islam. The Sunna also demonstrates this importance of language. According to the Prophet's wife 'Ā'isha, the Messenger of God did not speak rapidly, with words running into one another. She explained that "The Prophet used to talk so clearly, that if somebody wanted to count the number of his words, he could do so".<sup>288</sup>

'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (598-661)<sup>289</sup> explained that the Prophet spoke only when he was concerned, and comforted the people instead of giving them lengthy lectures. Also, according to the primary sources, he never raised the tone of his voice in the market place. If anybody asked him to sit down or speak of his affairs, the Prophet listened to him patiently and gave heed to him, until he had finished speaking and departed.<sup>290</sup> Thus, the Prophet based his invitation methods on good language and kind ethical behaviour.

The ethical behaviour of the Prophet was a key factor in his successful ability to communicate with those around him. This mode of oral control is reflected in the following Qur'anic statement; "...you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; ..."<sup>291</sup>

In another verse, the Qur'ān states quite clearly that the Prophet should invite

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288 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book 56, The Virtues and Merits of Prophet and his Companions, Chapter 22, ḥadīth no: 768-A, vol. 4, p. 494.

289 - Abī Ṭālib b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib al-Hāshimī al-Qurayshī, Abū al-Ḥasan, cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad, the fourth caliph (amīr al-mu'minīn). He was born in Mecca and was the second person to accept Islam after Khadījah. He was very eloquent and very knowledgeable. He married Muḥammad's daughter Fāṭima and of their marriage were born their two sons al-Ḥasān and al-Ḥusayn. In the year 35 he became the caliph. On the 17th of Ramaḍān 661 he was assassinated. From him 586 traditions were transmitted.

290 - Nadwi, A Guidebook for Muslims, p. 140-41.

291 - The Qur'ān, 3: 159.

people to the way of God through wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a constructive manner.<sup>292</sup>

## 2- To be kind and humble:

The previous section has demonstrated that the Prophet's behaviour towards others was always exemplary. 'Ā'isha narrated that the Prophet said: "God loves that one should be kind and lenient in all matters"<sup>293</sup> The prophet also recommended that his companions should follow the same moral code, preaching the message of Islam in a kind and good manner. In one of the traditions the prophet says: "Verily God has prescribed proficiency in all things..."<sup>294</sup> The Prophet never used bad language against anyone, stating that the best amongst people are those who are the best in manners and character.<sup>295</sup>

Even after Muḥammad had succeeded in uniting all the Arab tribes under the banner of Islam, his austere lifestyle did not change. Thus it is recorded that even at this momentous stage in his career, the Prophet continued to help with the cooking, and perform tasks such as mending his own clothes. Other traditions (*ḥadīth*) record the prophet to have said that he was not a king, but the son of a Quraysh woman who used to eat dried meat.<sup>296</sup>

## 3- Choosing the easy way in applying religion:

The Qur'ān also states: "God has not laid upon man in religion any hardship,<sup>297</sup> ...And He intends for you (humans) ease..."<sup>298</sup> In keeping with this

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292 - Ibid., 16: 125.

293 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book 73, The Book of 'Ādāb (Good Manners), Chapter 35, ḥadīth no: 53, vol. 8, p. 32, 33.

294 - Nawawī, Forty ḥadīth, ḥadīth no: 17, p. 64.

295 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book 56, The Virtue and Merits of Prophet and his Companions, Chapter 22, ḥadīth no: 759, vol. 4, p. 491.

296 - A Guidebook for Muslims, by Nadwi, p. 145.

297 - The Qur'ān, 22: 78.

298 - Ibid., 2: 185.



general maxim, the Prophet is reported to have said: "God does not want to put men to hardship because He knows better than men himself." In the second chapter of the Qur'ān, after a verse which establishes the finality of the Qur'anic dispensation, it is stated: "There is no compulsion in religion" (*la ikraha fid-dīn*)<sup>299</sup> In one of the *ḥadīth qudsī*,<sup>300</sup> the Prophet told people not to oppress one another.<sup>301</sup> Many traditions of the Prophet show that he always chose the easy way, whenever possible. 'Ā'isha narrated that "Whenever the Prophet was given a choice on more than one matter, he would choose the easier one, as long as it was not sinful to do so; but if it was sinful he would not approach it."<sup>302</sup>

"And by the Mercy of God, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (God's) forgiveness for them: and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in God, certainly, God loves those who put their trust (in Him)."<sup>303</sup>

If the Prophet Muḥammad heard a baby crying while he was leading a prayer, he invariably shortened his prayer. Once he stated: "I stand up for prayer and intend to recite a longer *sūra*, but when I hear a baby crying I cut the prayer short so that his mother may not feel uneasy."<sup>304</sup>

The Prophet was not a person who applied Islamic revelation with strict pressure as a king or dictator might. But rather he applied Islamic commands justly, equally and in a flexible way. He advised his companions, "Facilitate things to people,

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299 - Ibid., 2: 256.

300 - A Divine saying. A term used for a *ḥadīth* which relates a revelation from God in the language of the Prophet Muḥammad.

301 - Nawawī, Forty *ḥadīth*, *ḥadīth* no: 24, p. 80.

302 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book 56, The Virtue and Merits of Prophet and his Companions, Chapter 22, *ḥadīth* no: 760, vol. 4, p. 491..

303 - The Qur'ān, 3: 159.

304 - Nadwi, A Guidebook for Muslims, p.144.

and don't make it hard for them and give them good tidings and do not make them run away (from Islam).<sup>305</sup>

The prophet was content to offer explanation and/or clarification of God's commands. He did not stipulate any commands other than those in the Qur'ān. This was in line with the divine will as expressed in the Qur'ān: "O you who believe!, ask not about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble. But if you ask about them while the Qur'ān is being revealed, they will be made plain to you... Before you, a community asked such questions, then on that account they became disbelieves"<sup>306</sup> Two sayings of the prophet help to clarify this Qur'anic theme: "The most sinful person amongst Muslims is the one who has asked about something which was not prohibited but which was then prohibited because of his questioning."<sup>307</sup>

"Leave me, as I do not profess a legal provision, for those who lived before you and were annihilated because of their endless questions and disputes with their prophets. So if I order you to do something, do it as you can. And if I forbid you to do something, keep away from it."<sup>308</sup>

#### 4- Considering the variation in people's mental understanding:

Abū Mūsā, one of the Prophet's Companions, narrated: "I entered the Prophet's house with two men of my clan; both of them asked the Prophet, saying: "O Messenger of God, would you please appoint us in one of these public offices which God has put in your hands?" The prophet said : "We, by God's name, do

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305 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book 3, The Book of Knowledge, Chapter 12, ḥadīth no: 69, vol. 1, p. 60.

306 - The Qur'ān, 5: 101-102.

307 - Bukhārī, Sahih, The Book of Holding Fast to the Qur'ān and the Tradition, chapter 3, hadith no: 392, vol. 9, p. 290.

308 - Bukhārī, Sahih, The Book of Holding Fast to the Qur'ān and the Tradition, chapter 2, hadith no: 391, vol. 9, p. 289.



not appoint to the public offices in our state those who ask for them, nor any one who is covetous for such a thing".<sup>309</sup>

In another tradition, the Prophet advised 'Abdurrahmān b. 'Awf, "O 'Abdurrahmān, do not ask for public office, because if it has been given to you accordingly, you will be left to depend on yourself; but if you have been assigned to such an office without requesting it, you will be backed on this appointment by God".<sup>310</sup>

Another *ḥadīth* reads: "He who invests a man with an office while he knows that there is some one better than him, he is a cheater of Allah, His Messenger and of the Muslims."<sup>311</sup> 'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb<sup>312</sup> explained this *ḥadīth* as stating: "Anyone invested with an affair of the Muslims, who then delegates a part of that affair to another because of some friendship or relationship, is a cheater of Allah, of His Messenger and of the Muslims."<sup>313</sup>

In other traditions, the Prophet made clear that he does not assign authority to one who asks for it, or to one who covets it.<sup>314</sup> Once Abū Dhar<sup>315</sup> asked the Prophet to make him a governor, thereupon the Prophet said " You are weak, Abū Dhar, and it is a trust which will be a cause of shame and regret on the Day of Resurrection except for him who undertakes it as it ought to be undertaken and fulfils his duty in it."<sup>316</sup>

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309 - Muslim, Sahih, Kitāb al-'Imāra, chapter DCCLVI, hadith no: 4489, vol. 3, p. 1014.

310 - Ibid., 3401.

311 - Taymiya, Ibn Taymiya on Public and Private Law in Islam, by Dr. Omar A. Farrukh, p. 14.

312 - 'Umar, b. al-Khaṭṭāb b. Nufayl al-Qurayshī al-'Adawī, Abū Ḥaṣṣ. The second caliph and the first one who was given the title amīr al-mu'minīn. He was one of the strong and righteous Companions. He accepted Islam five years before the Hijra and attended many military campaigns. During his times Islamic state was rapidly and considerably extended.

313 - Taymiya, Ibn Taymiya on Public and Private Law in Islam, By Dr. Omar A. Farrukh, p.14.

314 - Cleary, The Wisdom of Prophet, p. 119.

315 - Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī was a very pious Companion of the Prophet.

316 - Tabrizi, Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh, By James Robson, D. Litt, D. D., Book 17, vol. 1, p. 783,

All of the above traditions highlight some of the characteristics of the prophetic wisdom. The main design of the prophetic guidance here is to ensure that the right person fills the right role. These appointments must be based on merit rather than any connections the candidates might have with those already in positions of wealth and power. This will ensure that the sphere known as *maṣlaḥa* (the public interest) in *Uṣūl-al-fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) is assigned its proper place in a functioning Islamic society.

## 5-Balance between the rights of the community and the rights of the individual:

The Prophet distinguished between criminal acts and the personal rights of the criminal. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb for example, narrated: “During the life time of the Prophet there was a man who was nicknamed, “Donkey”, and he used to make God’s Apostle, laugh (because of his deep love for the Prophet). He was lashed by the Prophet because of his drinking. And one day he was brought to the Prophet on the same charge and was again lashed. A man among the people said “O God curse him! How frequently he has been brought (to the Prophet on such a charge)!” The prophet said, Do not curse him, for by God, I know he loves God and His Apostle.”<sup>317</sup>

Another relevant example is the case of the Muslim woman who came to the prophet and insisted that the divine law should be carried out on her since she had committed fornication (*zinā*)<sup>318</sup>. In response, the Prophet commanded that she be stoned. After she died, the Prophet ordered that she be prayed for. ‘Umar al-Khaṭṭāb asked the Prophet why this should be when she had committed fornication (*zinā*). The Prophet replied that her repentance was so great, it would have been equivalent to the repentance of seventy Madinean Muslims.<sup>319</sup>

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317 - Bukhārī, Sahih, The Book of Ḥudūd, Chapter 6, ḥadīth no: 771, vol. 8, p. 507.

318 - One of the capital sins in Islam is sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not married to one another.

319 - Muslim, Sahih, Kitāb al-Ḥudūd, Chapter DCLXXXII, ḥadīth no: 4207, vol. 3, p. 917.



As a rule the Prophet never acted on the basis of personal emotions, but rather dealt with wrongdoers justly. It could be said that, although the Prophet never wavered in the face of distributing punishment to those who truly deserved it, he nevertheless always defended the criminals personal rights.

A good example of the Prophet's unwavering fairness is when al-'Abbās, the uncle of the Prophet was shackled with other prisoners taken in the battle for Badr<sup>320</sup>. The Prophet could not sleep due to the anguish he felt over his uncle's predicament. The *Anṣār*,<sup>321</sup> (helpers), becoming aware of the Prophet's uneasiness, offered to release his uncle without demanding any indemnity. The prophet, however, did not agree to the suggestion.<sup>322</sup>

## 6- Tolerance for other religions and their representatives:

As previously mentioned, the Qur'ān makes it clear that there is to be no compulsion in religion<sup>323</sup>. According to Muslim scholars, the reason for this injunction is that a person must perform good actions through good intentions and not through the threat of coercion if he or she is to earn the pleasure of God. If this were not the case then the gift of free will bestowed upon human beings by their creator would become meaningless. It is within this understanding that the Prophet granted complete freedom of faith to the Jews of Madina and to the Christians of Nejran (the only restrictions placed upon the peoples of these faiths in Yathrib were in regard to the internal and external security of the emerging Islamic community as a socio-political entity), and this practice was strictly adhered to by his immediate successors. For instance, 'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb, the second caliph, granted the same right of faith to the Christians of Palestine.<sup>324</sup> Ibn Sa'd gives an account relating that

320 - A small town south west of Madina, where the Prophet defeated the Meccans in 625.

321 - The usual designation of those men of Madina who supported Muḥammad, in distinction from the Muhājirūn or 'emigrants', his Meccan followers. (See The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 7. p. 356).

322 - Nadwi, A Guidebook for Muslims, p. 144.

323 - The Qur'ān, 2: 256. "There is no compulsion in religion..."

324 - Rahman, Islam Ideology and the Way of Life, p. 336.

'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb himself applied this principle to his Christian slave. It is also narrated: "No desire to hunt after proselytes is attributed to Muḥammad, either. If they convert to Islam, it is well; if not, they remain in their previous religion; indeed Islam is wide."<sup>325</sup>

In the Prophet's teaching we find some examples of wisdom concerning his relationship with members of other religions. Some instructions relate to principles which in today's world could be said to be universal in their scope and genuine concern for human rights. Human rights in Islam are not restricted to any geographical boundaries or any state, but are universal in nature and are enjoyed by all human beings. These rights are as follows: The right of life, protection of property and honour, religious freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of/to work, the right to the fulfilment of basic needs, as well as rights of equality before the law.<sup>326</sup>

In addition to the Prophet's well known constructive attitude to non-Muslim citizens, he strongly advised his companions that, "On the day of Judgement, I myself will act as accuser of any man who oppresses a person under the protection of Islam, and lays excessive burdens on him."<sup>327</sup>

The Prophet always defended non-Muslims rights, a principle which is very evident in the historical document known as the 'treaty of Madina', in which he gave the Jews equal rights of citizenship and religious liberty.<sup>328</sup> It was in Madina that the prophet and some of his companions witnessed a funeral procession pass in front of them. The Prophet stood up and his companions followed his example, thereupon Jābir b. 'Abdullāh notified the Prophet that this was the funeral procession of a Jew. The Prophet responded "Whenever you see a funeral procession, you should stand

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325 - Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt*, vol. 6, 110:2, 30:10, Leiden, 1904-1940, Quoted from *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, by Ignaz Goldziher, p. 33ff.

326 - Rahman, *Islam Ideology and the Way of Life*, pp. 333, 34.

327 - Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, p. 35.

328 - Khan, *Islamic Jurisprudence*, p. 6.



up.”<sup>329</sup> In another version of the same tradition the Prophet is quoted as stating “Is he not human!”.

When the Muslims returned as victors to Mecca, many not unreasonably feared that a blood bath might ensue. However, in the event, and with the exception of a few well-known criminals, the Prophet proclaimed an amnesty for the Meccan people. As a result of this act of supreme wisdom and political acumen, virtually the entire Meccan community embraced Islam. Unusually the Qur’ān devotes an entire chapter to this important historical event, short though it is; “When comes the help of God and the conquest (*fath*). And you see the people enter Allah’s Religion in crowds. So glorify the praises of your Lord, and ask for His forgiveness. Verily, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and forgives.”<sup>330</sup>

#### 7- Religious obligations and the non-religious realm of life:

It is known that the Prophet Muḥammad in daily life did not force his companions to follow his personal experience blindly, but instead gave them permission to behave freely in their life within the framework of Islamic law and ethics. In cases of daily life the Prophet did not dictate any exact method with by to carry out such injunctions.

Shāh Walīullāh (d. 1767) divided the prophetic Sunna into two sections. The first one is the knowledge that serves to propagate the Islamic message, which includes the sciences for the next life and other Divine beliefs, all of which are direct results of revelation. This part of Sunna also includes the Divine laws, which were put into practice by the Prophet, again on the basis of revelation. Although most of these practical applications were the result of the Prophet’s own *ijtihād*, he was protected from error by the guidance of God. Thus, all of these types of prophetic wisdom

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329 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book 23, The Book of Janā’iz (Funerals), Chapter 48, ḥadīth no: 398, vol. 2, p. 224.

330 - The Qur’ān, 114: 110

became binding on all Muslims, because these *ijtihāds* were sanctioned by Divine revelation in an indirect way.<sup>331</sup>

The second category of prophetic knowledge encompasses daily matters such as clothing, eating, resting and necessary routines, unless behaviour is in violation of Islamic ethics. In this respect there are many aspects of the Prophet's life which depended on the climate, environment and customs of the Arabian culture to which belonged. It is within this context that the Prophet is known to have asked the advice of his companions from time to time. The companions themselves felt confident enough to question the Prophet on occasions when they were unsure whether his judgement was purely personal opinion or the result of divine prophetic inspiration. Perhaps the best known example of such an occurrence relates to an incident that immediately preceded the battle of Badr. Before the battle one of the companions called al-Hubab b. al-Mundhīr asked the prophet if his decision to camp in a certain place was based on God's command or whether it was a matter of his personal opinion regarding military strategy. When the Prophet told him that it was the latter of the two, al-Hubab suggested an alternative strategy with which the Prophet concurred.<sup>332</sup>

It is also interesting to note that many later Muslim scholars including such figures as Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406)<sup>333</sup> and Shāh Walīullāh (d. 1767) rejected the efficiency of the traditional medicine of the Prophet (*ṭibb al-nabawi*). According to these scholars, the Prophet's knowledge of this subject was not based on revelation, but

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331 - Daud, *The concept of Knowledge in Islam*, p. 49, 50.

332 - Ibn Ishak, *Sīrat Rasūlullāh*; Quoted from "The concept of Knowledge in Islam", by Daud Wou Mohd Nor Wan, p. 48.

333 - He was born at Tunisia of a family belonging to Seville. He received his first education and learned philosophy from a teacher who knew Eastern philosophy. After studying all known sciences he occupied himself sometimes in the service of State, and sometimes in travel. Because of his ambassadorship at several courts in Spain and Africa as well as his contact with Christian courts such as the court of Peter the Cruel in Seville he gained him wide and full experience of the world of that time. His well known book "Introduction (Muqaddima)", contains quite strong sociological and historical elements. Many writers even accept it as the first example of Philosophy of History,



rather it was a culmination of popular Arabians beliefs of his time. However, Ibn Khaldūn also pointed out that the Prophetic medicine might be of some benefit if a Muslim practised it with sincere faith.<sup>334</sup>

In Muslim's *ḥadīth* collection '*Ṣaḥīḥ*' show the above differences, there is a separate chapter with the following heading; "It is obligatory to follow the Prophet in all matters pertaining to religion, but one is free to act on one's own opinion in matters which pertain to technical skill". Under this heading we read the following well known saying of the Prophet: "I am only a man, and when I tell you with something it is according to my own opinion; you are free to follow it or not. But if I tell you something about religion, then accept it , for I will never lie about God."<sup>335</sup> In short, the Prophet's opinions on the worldly matters were based on his daily experiences, customs and the current sciences.

The above examples explicitly show that Muslims should exercise their own *ijtihād* regarding worldly matters according to their knowledge or current customs, and without any compulsion or force from religion and state authority. Therefore, if Muslims come to recognise the division between religious knowledge and knowledge from life experience, then this would be the starting point towards Islamic wisdom. This would promote more freedom for the Muslims in their daily life within the framework of religion. The Prophet never insisted on his personal authority over Muslims when his conclusions were derived from his own daily experiences and cultural understanding.

## 8- Wisdom as the capacity to understand religion (*dīn*):

To examine this aspect it will be helpful to look at the Yemenite culture during the time of the Prophet. In one of the traditions of the Prophet, Yemenite wisdom is described as a significant example of wisdom. When a letter of the Prophet was received by Badhan, the ruler of Yemen, he announced his entry into Islam, followed by all of his people including the Persians among them (at that time,

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334 - Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddima; Quoted from "God and Man", by Izutsu, p. 130.

335 - Muslim, Saih, Kitāb al-Fada'il, chapter, CMLXXXVI, hadith no:5831, vol. 4, p. 1259.

Yemen had been under the control of the Persian Sasanid kingdom). For this reason the Prophet said on a number of occasions that Yemen is a place of wisdom, because of their deep understanding on religion.

The Prophet in his traditions stated that “the people of Yemen are more soft and gentle in their hearts. The capacity for understanding religion is Yemenite and wisdom is Yemenite.”<sup>336</sup> In another tradition, Abu Hurayra (d. 678).<sup>337</sup> narrated that the Prophet said, “Pride and arrogance are characteristics of the rural Bedouins, while calmness is found among the owners of sheep. Belief is Yemenite, and wisdom is also Yemenite. The Yemenites are well-known for their true belief and wisdom.”<sup>338</sup> From these traditions one can recognise some characteristics of wisdom, to be soft and gentle hearted, and the capacity for a deep understanding of religion.

Another sign of the high estimation which the Prophet had of Yemenite wisdom can be seen in the fact that he dispatched the most knowledgeable and wise Muslims among his companions as emissaries to Yemen who would later assume the roles of rulers and judges, such as Mu‘ādh b. Jabal and ‘Alī b. Abū Ṭālib. Mu‘ādh b. Jabal (d. 639)<sup>339</sup> narrated that: “When the Prophet ordered me to proceed to Yemen, he asked me: When a case is referred to you for adjudication, how will you decide it?” I said: I would decide it in the light of the Qur’ān. He said: If you do not find any guidance in the Qur’ān, then? I said: Then I would decide it according

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336 - Ḥanbal, Ahmad Ibn, Musnad, Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn, ḥadīth no. 10745, quoted from Mawsu‘al ḥadīth (cd-room), by Sharikat al-Sakhr li Baramij al-Hisab, First Edition: Egypt, 1991-1995; Muslim, Sahih, hadith no: 92, vol. 1, p. 36, chapter XXII.

337 - ‘Abdurrahmān b. Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, known by the nick name Abū Hurayra (fathers of cats), was a famous Companion who lived with the prophet for a while and recorded from him a large number of ḥadīth. He memorised more traditions than any of the companions. From him 5374 ḥadīth were narrated. He died in Madina in 679.

338 - Muslim, Sahih, The Book of Faith, chapter, XXII, hadith no: 86, vol. 1, p. 35.

339 - A great Companion who was appointed by the Prophet as the governor of Yemen and judge. He was one of the knowledgeable persons about ḥalāl and ḥarām. He attended all battles with the Prophet. He transmitted 157 ḥadīth.



to the Sunna of the Prophet. He then said: If you do not find anything in the Sunna of the Prophet too, what then? I replied: In that case I would resort to *ijtihād* and endeavour to form my own opinion, and would strain every nerve towards that end. When the Prophet heard this from me, he patted me on my chest and said: "All thanks to God, who has endowed the representative of the Prophet of God with that wisdom which the Prophet of God approves." <sup>340</sup> In another tradition, the Prophet also advised Mu'ādh in the following way: "(When you go to Yemen) Beware the plea of the oppressed, for there is no screen between it and God."<sup>341</sup> On another occasion, the Prophet sent 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib to Yemen as a ruler. This decision was legitimated on the basis that these two companions were instructed directly by the Prophet and had, as a result, gained prophetic wisdom understanding.

### 9- Deriving wisdom from Poetry:

Another source of wisdom in Islamic culture can be found in its poetry. In this respect the Prophet approved of those of his companions who recited poetry. Even when his companions recited their pre-Islamic poems he listened silently and often smiled at their remarks. It is also a well documented fact that the Prophet encouraged the famous Muslim Poet Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 665)<sup>342</sup> to recite his verses of poetry, and remarked that God had helped Ḥassān through Gabriel to defend the religion of God and His Prophet.<sup>343</sup> Indeed Ḥassān was considered to be the Prophet's own personal poet. The Prophet stated that "Verily in poetry there is wisdom."<sup>344</sup>

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340 - Islahi, Islamic Law, p. 31.

341 - Cleary, The Wisdom of Prophet, p. 26.

342 - A poet of Madina who entered Islam and composed many poems which extolled the Prophet, the faith, and victories of Muslims. (See The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, by Cyril Glassé, p. 150, 151).

343 - Nadwi, A Guidebook for Muslims, p. 151.

344 - Muslim, Sahih, by Abdul Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī, New Delhi, vol. 4, p. 1221, ff. 2616.

## 10- Applying Justice:

According to Khadduri, the Qur'ān and the traditions of the prophet show that the qualities of equity and temperance are second only to belief in the Oneness of God.<sup>345</sup> It is said in the Qur'ān "...and that when you judge between people, you judge with justice..."<sup>346</sup> In another well-known narration the Prophet stated: "One day office of a just ruler is better than sixty years of worship". Another tradition of the Prophet states: "The most beloved in the eyes of God is the just ruler, and the most hateful in His eyes is the unjust ruler."<sup>347</sup>

Muḥammad Iqbāl argued that one of the essential foundations of Islamic politics is that all the members of the community are absolutely equal, and therefore there is no aristocracy or class division in Islam. The Qur'ān stated, "...Verily, the most honourable of you in the Sight of God is that who has taqwa (pious and righteous persons who fear God much)..."<sup>348</sup> There is also no priesthood, and no caste system in Islam. These characteristics of Islam are the direct result of belief in the Oneness of God and the mission of his messenger. The application of Islamic equality made early Muslim states the greatest political powers in the world.<sup>349</sup>

Islamic justice requires the Islamic legal perception and sanction. The aims of Islamic justice are the protection of all human rights, establishing the equality and welfare of the community and individuals. These themes are very prominent in the early scholarly writings on Islamic Jurisprudence and political law (*siyāsa shari'a*).

While the Prophet always tried to maintain the rights of individuals who came before the law, he followed the ordinance of the Qur'ān in being unwavering where

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345 - Khadduri, *Islamic Conception of Justice*, p. 10.

346 - The Qur'ān, 4: 58.

347 - Ḥanbal, Aḥmad Ibn, *Musnad*, Bāqi *Musnad al-Mukthirīn*, ḥadīth no: 10745, quoted from *Mawsu'al ḥadīth* (cd-room), by Sharikat al-Sakhr li Baramij al-Hisab, First Edition: Egypt, 1991-1995.

348 - The Qur'ān, 49: 13.

349 - Vahid, *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbāl*, p. 52,53,54.



the implementation of justice was necessary; “What destroyed the nations preceding you, was that if a noble amongst them stole, they would forgive him; and if a poor person amongst them stole, they would inflict Allah’s legal punishment on him, By Allah, if Fāṭima, the daughter of Muḥammad, had stolen, I would cut off her hand.”<sup>350</sup>

However, in Islam the rights of individuals are not unlimited, but are balanced by considerations of duties to God (*huqūqullāh*) and duties to society (*huqūq al-‘ibād*). The first of these duties implies praying (*‘ibāda*) and the second one implies the application of Islamic law. In Islam these two areas are accepted as the subdivisions of the Islamic *Sharī‘a*.

Muslims believe that the Prophet’s activities can be viewed as models for justice, both on social and economic matters. For instance, in one well-known narration the Prophet defended the rights of workers by stating, “Pay the wages of a labourer before his sweat dries up.”<sup>351</sup> Therefore, to apply Islamic justice is an important characteristic of the Prophetic wisdom, it requires knowledge of the aim of Islamic law and its functions. Imam Ibn Taymiya clarified the matter when he stated: “Anything that departs from justice to oppression, from mercy to harshness, from welfare to misery, and from wisdom to folly, has nothing to do with the *sharī‘a*.”<sup>352</sup>

### Conclusion:

One can deduce the principles of Islamic wisdom through the actions and sayings of the Prophet, which are the living manifestation of the Qur’anic principles. Thus, we can view the Qur’ān as a communication between God and humanity, mediated through the prophetic wisdom.

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350 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book 55, The Book of the Prophets, Chapter 46, ḥadīth no: 681, vol. 4, p. 453.

351 - Sunan Ibn Mājah, hadith no: 2434, Quoted from, *A Guidebook for Muslims*, by S Abdul Hasan Nadwi, p. 146.

352 - Ibn al-Qayyim, *Y’lām al-Muwaqqi‘In*; Quoted from “Islam”, by Khurshid Ahmad, p. 176.

The Prophet Muḥammad based Islamic society upon faith and ethics. In this community, concerns of wealth and materialism are replaced by higher matters, nobility of soul and piety. The Prophet Muḥammad utilised his revealed wisdom and managed peacefully to unite men and women, rich and poor, white and black, the powerful and the weak, under the one common identity, a true brotherhood of man (*umma*).

To achieve this equality the Prophet practised consultation with his colleagues concerning political and social matters which the Qur'ān does not deal with systematically. Islamic wisdom becomes clearer through focusing on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, in conjunction with a knowledge of the Qur'ān incorporating an historical dimension.



## CHAPTER V

# WISDOM IN ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE (*FIQH*)

### INTRODUCTION:

In the previous chapter, I concluded that the Islamic concept of wisdom represents the practical dimension of the Divine commands, through the example of the Prophet. This prophetic wisdom continued through the practice and understanding of the Companions and was later formulated as Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Therefore, *fiqh* represents the whole body of Islamic law derived from the Qur'ān and Sunna, which is designed to meet changing situations.

In this sense, there is a shared meaning between the definition of Prophetic wisdom and *fiqh*, both of them relating to the practical application of the revealed Divine commands. Therefore wisdom should be present in Islamic law (*sharī'a*) and applied again to this area. Furthermore, to apply *ijtihād* within Islamic law requires the ability to distinguish between different options and situations through a deep understanding of wisdom.

Although it is not my intention here to go into the details of the historical development of Islamic Jurisprudence, it will be useful to give a brief introduction to Islamic Jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as a base for this chapter. This will include an examination of some technical concepts from Islamic Jurisprudence, for the purpose of identifying the dynamic element of Islamic law which is founded on prophetic wisdom.

### A- INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE:

#### 1-Definition of some concepts of Islamic jurisprudence:

a- *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence): The term '*fiqh*' literally means knowledge, intelligence and understanding.<sup>353</sup> Technically, the concept of '*fiqh*' refers to the whole corpus of Islamic jurisprudence springing from the two main Islamic sources, the Qur'ān

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353 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, Glossary and Index of Technical Terms (volumes I-VII), p. 89.

and the Sunna. Effectively, Muslim jurists synthesised a science by which they can derive the practical laws of Islam from the Qur'ān and the Sunna.

b- *Sharī'a* (Islamic Law): Etymologically *Sharī'a* refers to a path that leads people to the source from where they can drink water, and allow others to drink from it.<sup>354</sup> The implication is that the *Sharī'a* is not the target itself, but only the means. The Qur'ān uses the term *Sharī'a* "straight path" as follows, "Then We have put you (O Muḥammad) on a plain way of (Our) commandment (*Sharī'a*). So follow you that, and follow not the desires of those who know not."<sup>355</sup> In Islam it is believed that *Sharī'a* refers to all the commandments of Islamic law through the Qur'ān and the Sunna.

However, the concept of *fiqh* and *sharī'a* are not the same. The Science of Islamic law (*fiqh*) was derived from *sharī'a* to make its general commands specific and applicable to new situations. *sharī'a*, as the main principles of Islamic law, is unalterable while *fiqh* as a science can be developed according to new circumstances and parallel to the progression of a community. From this brief comparison it can be concluded that *Sharī'a* represents the general body of the Islamic law, while *fiqh* refers to the science of the understanding of this fixed body of Islamic law.

c- *Uṣūl al Fiqh*. To understand the Qur'ān and the Sunna, and to derive practical laws from their valid premises, Muslim jurists founded an essential science called (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*) "Source Methodology in Islamic Jurisprudence",<sup>356</sup> by which they established the Science of Islamic law, so called *fiqh*. Therefore, Islamic *fiqh* or Jurisprudence was the result of a juristic struggle to conclude practical rules for legislation regarding Islamic sources.

In the Islamic legal system *fiqh* is built upon *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, and gradually progressed as Islamic Legislation (*tashrī'*). However, the general direction of this science

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354 - Ibn Mansūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 3, p. 175 ff.

355 - The Qur'ān, 45: 18.

356 - Al 'Alwānī, *Uṣūl al Fiqh al Islamī*, p. 1.



comes from the Qur'ān and the application of the Prophet rather than from Muslim jurists' own opinions (*ijtihād*). In Islam it is believed that anyone who presumes to ascribe these Divine functions to any other than God commits the sin of association (*shirk*) because God alone is the real law-giver.<sup>357</sup>

*Uṣūl al-Fiqh* takes its validity from the Qur'ān and the Sunna, and applies its methodology again to these two sources, with the purpose of deriving rules to new situations. In other words, the Qur'ān and the Sunna are both the sources and the subject matter of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*. Therefore, Islamic jurisprudence, as a science of legislation, was based on the Qur'ān and Sunna under the mediation of human reason.

Whilst *fiqh* is concerned with the details and the various cases of Islamic laws, Principles of Jurisprudence, or *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, is a tool by which jurists derive practical rules from the premises of the Qur'ān and the Sunna. *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* is an essential science of the *Sharī'a*, upon which all other Islamic disciplines can be based. In *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* reason and revelation combine in a systematic structure as a kind of Islamic Philosophy.

By the assistance of this science, Muslim jurists can decide what is right and what is wrong in Islam. However, to achieve this task, Muslim scholars need to know certain disciplines such as logic, linguistic and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*). This knowledge is then applied to the Qur'ān and the Sunna in order to understand their various injunctions.<sup>358</sup> If we look at these disciplines, we can conclude that Islamic Jurisprudence (*fiqh*) was in fact the embryonic locus of the Islamic science which were formulated later on.

Thus, the relationship between *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* and *fiqh* is like the relationship of the text and grammar. *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* provides the foundation on which concepts of law can be built. To achieve this task, Muslim scholars need other Islamic sciences, such as interpretation of the Qur'ān (*tafsīr*), Sunna, the life of Prophet (*sīra*), Islamic history, and belief system (*'aqā'id*).

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357 - Ibid., p. 4.

358 - Ibid., p. 3, 4.

## 2- Sources of Islamic law:

In Islam, God is not only the Creator but also the law-giver. In the Qur'ān we read "...Surely, His is the Creation and commandment..."<sup>359</sup> In another verse of the Qur'ān, it states: "Know you not that it is God to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth..."<sup>360</sup>

The following verses of the Qur'ān explicitly mention that man is responsible for accepting Islamic law: "And so Judge between them by what Allah has revealed ..."<sup>361</sup>

"(Say) follow what has been sent down unto you from your Lord, and follow not any protectors, beside Him (God)..."<sup>362</sup>

To follow this Divine guidance Muslims need some proof (*dalīl*) on which they practise Islamic law. According to the classical *fiqh* authorities, there are four proofs for Islamic law; Qur'ān, Sunna, analogy (*qiyās*) and consensus (*ijmā'*). Imām Shāfi'ī, in his book *Risāla*, declared that no one should give an opinion on a specific matter by merely saying it is permitted or prohibited, unless he/she is aware that legal knowledge must be based on the Qur'ān and the Sunna, or derived from consensus (*ijmā'*) and analogy (*qiyās*).<sup>363</sup>

a-The Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in its own verses describe itself as the source for judgement, "And so Judge between them by what Allah has revealed and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they turn you far away from some of that which Allah has sent down to you..."<sup>364</sup>

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359 - The Qur'ān, 7: 54.

360 - The Qur'ān, 2: 107.

361 - Ibid., 5: 49.

362 - Ibid., 7: 3.

363 - Shāfi'ī, *Risāla*, p. 78.

364 - The Qur'ān, 5: 49.



b- Tradition (Sunna): Sunna can be described as the “application” of the Qur’ān, which is expressed through the Prophet’s oral, practical or silent manifestation. Therefore, the life of the Prophet gives examples for Muslims about many different areas and how to understand and apply Islamic law (*sharī‘a*). The Qur’ān teaches that the authority of the Prophet should be accepted by Muslims as a source of legislation, as found in the following verse. “...Whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain, and fear God...”<sup>365</sup> Therefore the Sunna represented God’s guidance through the model of the Prophet.

c- *Ijtihād*: In Arabic, ‘*ijtihād*’ means to “strive to the utmost”<sup>366</sup> or “to make a fullest effort”. In Islamic legal understanding it means strive hard in search for a ruling which is based on a deeper understanding of the meaning of the Qur’ān and Sunna. *Ijtihād* in the widest sense is a method of meeting the needs of the community, for which there are no explicit answers in the Qur’ān and Sunna.<sup>367</sup>

When the Prophet appointed Mu‘ādh b. Jabal as a judge to Yemen, he asked him how he would perform his duty; Mu‘ādh’s reply provides us with the basic principles underlying individual judgement or *ijtihād*. “When the Prophet ordered me (Mu‘ādh) to proceed to Yemen, he asked me: When a case is referred to you for adjudication, how will you decide on it?” I replied: I would decide on it in the light of the Qur’ān. He said: If you do not find any guidance in the Qur’ān, then? I said: Then I would decide on it according to the Sunna of the Prophet. He said: If you do not find anything in the Sunna of the Prophet of God too, what then? I replied: In this case I would resort to *ijtihād* and endeavour to form my own opinion, and would exert every effort towards that end. When the Prophet heard this reply from me, he patted me on my chest and said: “All thanks to God,

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365 - Ibid., p. 59: 7.

366 - Islahi, Islamic Law, p.51.

367 - Rahman, Islam Ideology and the Way of Life, p. 349.

who has endowed the representative of the Prophet of God with that wisdom<sup>368</sup> which the Prophet of God approves (of).”<sup>369</sup>

In addition to the Qur’ān and the Sunna, which are the main sources of Islam, there are secondary sources laid down under the heading of *ijtihād*. In the above tradition, Mu’ādh b. Jabal places *ijtihād* in third place descending, which includes all other sources such as *ijmā’* and *qiyās*. However, *ijtihād* is not just an opinion, but the result of deep consideration and pondering upon the first two sources, to reach Islamic values and principles through injunctions. Thus, to make *ijtihād* one should know the Qur’ān and the Sunna, and if no explicit answer is found therein the scholars should decide according to their own view, which is best guided by the spirit of the Qur’ān and the Sunna.

It must be pointed out that when Mu’ādh stated, “I shall strive to determine my view” it did not mean that he would give his verdict simply on the basis of what came to his mind. On the contrary, he would search deeply for the truth, and would put to the test all available means which helped him to discover the most appropriate solution.<sup>370</sup>

Although it is true to say that *ijtihād* is not the privilege of a particular class or group, nevertheless, it is equally true that not everyone in Islam is competent enough to carry out *ijtihād*. After all, when capability is an obvious prerequisite for a job, how can everyone be equal to this task? In this respect certain conditions are placed on Muslim scholars in addition to their knowledge of the Qur’ān and the Sunna. In general, they must be well acquainted with the problems and situations that arise in their time and community.

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368 - Although in place of the concept of wisdom some scholars give a different word; but most of these terms carry a meaning very close to wisdom, such as insight and knowledge. However, in the present translation Islahi used the concept of wisdom in particular instead of any other because Muadh was speaking about deep understanding on a problem, and this is the main meaning of the wisdom.

369 - Islahi, Islamic Law, p. 31.

370 - Ibid., p. 52.



Yet *ijtihād*, as the third proof for Islamic law, often needs to be supported by two of its essential wings, *Ijmā'* and *qiyās*.<sup>371</sup> Regarding *qiyās* and its correct usage, there is not agreement among Muslim scholars. The majority agree that *ijmā'* is the highest form of *ijtihād* which no Muslim should disregard. Undoubtedly, when a *mujtahid* formulates his opinion (*ijtihād*) on a certain issue with the assistance of the principles underlying the Qur'ān and the Sunna, his or her decision can be seen only as an individual opinion.<sup>372</sup>

- *Ijmā'* (consensus): *Ijmā'* refers to the agreement of the religious scholars on a legal matter, which is not determined explicitly by the Qur'ān and the Sunna. According to Shāfi'ī, the consensus supports the authenticity of the Qur'ān, the Sunna and *qiyās*, and its results.<sup>373</sup>

Al-Ālūsī, in his book *Rūḥ al-Ma'ani*, stated that when 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib asked the Prophet, 'O Messenger of God! what should we do if, after your demise, we are confronted with a problem about which we do not find anything from you?' The Prophet said; "Get together those who are obedient (to God and His Law) people from amongst my followers, and place the matter before them for consultation. Do not make divisions on the basis of the opinions of any single person."<sup>374</sup>

- *Qiyās*: *Qiyās* is one of the important methods of *ijtihād*. In Islamic law, it refers to the personal legal reasoning which is exercised by applying analogy to the two fundamental sources of Islamic law, the Qur'ān and the Sunna.

Indeed, *qiyās* and *ijmā'* are not sources but only the methods of *ijtihād* used to examine and solve daily problems. Although, 'consensus' (*ijmā'*) and personal analogy (*qiyās*)<sup>375</sup> are accepted by all the juristic schools, including the Ḥanafīs<sup>376</sup>,

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371 - Ibid., p. 31.

372 - Ibid., p. 53.

373 - Schacht, *The Origin of Muḥammadian Jurisprudence*, p. 2.

374 - Rahman, *Islam, Ideology and the Way of Life*, p. 312.

375 - Analogy or syllogism, the rules of interpretation and deduction of the rule of a specific cause.

Shāfi'īs, Ḥanbalīs and Mālikīs, the definitions placed on them have differed. For instance, Mālikīs reduced the concept of consensus to the Madinean consensus only, while according to Ḥanbalīs only the consensus of the first four caliphs,<sup>377</sup> while for the Ḥanafīs the consensus of all learned Muslims is accepted.

In addition to the above four sources, there are further possible secondary sources, such as custom (*'urf*), *istiḥsān*, *istiṣlāḥ*, public interest (*maṣlaḥa*), and *sadd al-dharā'i'*, which represent the wisdom of the Islamic law in their practical, dynamic and elastic nature.

### 3- Historical background:

Due to its dynamic open-ended nature, Islamic Jurisprudence was not completed during the lifetime of the Prophet. The history of Islamic law can be divided into different stages, from the time of the Prophet to the time of the Companions, onto the period of the classical *fiqh* schools, and then the *taqlīd*<sup>378</sup> period.

a- The time of the Prophet: The foundation of *fiqh* was instituted by the Prophet himself, when he approved the source's classification of Mu'ādh. The Prophet gave permission to Mu'ādh to use reason or *ijtihād* in those cases where there was no direct proof from the Qur'ān or the Sunna. On the other hand, the Prophet provided the framework of Islamic jurisprudence and its implementation, with regard to daily prayers, fasting and almsgiving, fighting with the enemy, inheritance, family law, marriage and divorce, and punishment for criminals.<sup>379</sup>

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376 - Al-Nu'mān b. Thābit, was one of the greatest jurists and the founder of the Ḥanafī school (madhhab). He was of Persian origin and was born and raised in Kūfa. A great mujtahid, one of four imāms of Ahl al-Sunna. If the inhabitants of a province had agreed on a social arrangement not for seen by the Islamic Law, this social arrangement should be considered as valid. Although he did not write any books, his students edited his ideas. Among the works ascribed to him are: Musnad, Makhārij, and Fiqh al-'Akbar.

377 - Kemali, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, p. 184-187.

378 - With reference to Fiqh, this means the following of previous authorities without questioning and the avoidance of *ijtihād*.

379 - Khan, Islamic Jurisprudence, p. 26.



Sometimes the Prophet's companions practised *ijtihād* on their own during the life time of the Prophet, and he guided them when they reported these practices to him. Most of those who practised *ijtihād* were the close companions of the Prophet, who were instructed and carefully trained on the objectives of the Qur'ān and the Sunna.<sup>380</sup>

b- The time of The Rightly Guided Caliphs: *Fiqh* was further advanced in the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, when new questions emerged often relating to the challenges of other cultures and civilisations, which were being encountered through the early conquests. During the time of the rightly Guided Caliphs, whenever a vital problem for *ijtihād* arose, they would invite all the men of learning to offer their opinion and advice. After thorough discussion and debate, the conclusions arrived at were accorded the status of consensus or *ijmā'*.

During the period of Abū Bakr and 'Umar b. al-Khattāb, all the leading scholars of *ijtihād* were living in Madina.<sup>381</sup> Even during the period of the third Caliph Uthmān and during the short term ruling of 'Alī the same practice prevailed.

The Rightly Guided caliphs and other companions (*ṣaḥāba*) did not give individual opinions the highest priority amongst the sources of Islam. They used their personal opinion in three ways, which became the basis of later *fiqh* development. They used first reason in the interpretation of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, second, with regard to judgements from similar cases in the Qur'ān and the Sunna, and third, deduction from the spirit of the Divine Law in the absence of any fitting text or analogy in the Qur'ān and the Sunna.<sup>382</sup> The impact of the Prophetic wisdom can be identified in the methodology and order of referring to the sources.

c- The period of formulation of *fiqh*: At the end of the Umayyad period (643-754 A.D.), the growth of *fiqh* gradually lost its practical dynamic relevance. The first reason for this emergence of the monarchical system which undermined the role of

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380 - Al 'Alwānī, Uṣūl al Fiqh al Islamī, p. 6.

381 - Islahi, Islamic Law, p. 73.

382 - Nasir, The Islamic Law of Personal Status. p. 2.

Islamic law in the formation of the state. This resulted in Islamic law becoming more of a theoretical study.

A second related reason was the emergence in this period of speculative theological discussions, which caused Muslim scholars to differ regarding the valid grounds of understanding the faith. This type of dispute had a direct affect on the formulation of the juristic schools. The various school of *kalām* groups, such as Jabriyya (Determinist theologians), Mu'tazila (the rationalist Muslim theologians), Salafiyya (Traditionalist theologians), had a direct impact on fossilising the thinking of the *fiqh* schools.

Although the impact of these two trends on juristic studies were quite deep, discovery and formulation of the divine law was maintained quite freely by several individual jurists. However, this kind of juristic struggle was influenced much more by the subjective view of the individual jurist than was the case in the time of the Prophet and the first four Caliphs. Also, it can be stated that the monarchic regime and theological divisions caused the structure of the Muslim community to be shaken.

In the Umayyad period Islamic Jurisprudence became an abstract theoretical discipline rather than a practical application. There was an apparent difference in approaching the various juristic problems which were not only due to the definition of the concept of *fiqh*, but also the methodology of deducing the legal injunction.

However, one positive development was that Islamic law in the Umayyad period gained autonomy from everyday political debate, and evolved independently. As a result of this independence, many of the ideas developed in the environment of free inquiry, due to the method of scholars on the interpretation of texts (the Qur'ān and the Sunna). Although Shī'a and Khārijīs based their sects on socio-political grounds, many Sunni Jurist schools flourished quite independently through free inquiry into the Qur'ān and the Sunna and specific circumstances.<sup>383</sup>

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383 - Ibid., p. 3.



Among the numerous Sunni schools only four , the Ḥanafīs, the Mālikīs, the Shāfi'īs and Ḥanbalīs, have survived to the present contemporary day. These legal schools have contributed different dimensions, and in different degrees to the development of *fiqh* in the different regions of the Islamic world. Each of these schools have important instruments for the clarification and application of the *sharī'a*. Yet, without the Prophet's application and interpretation through his Sunna, all other conclusions are not safe from human error.

d- Fiqh in the taqlīd period: Although the founders of the different juristic schools stated that their doctrine was not totally binding, and their principles should not be followed blindly, by the closing of the gate of *ijtihād* Islamic law became more static than at the time of the Prophet and his companions. Closing the gate lead to the invitation of imitation (*taqlīd*), and was almost the end of the practice of *ijtihād*.

Around the nineteen century A.D. the door of *ijtihād* was re-opened by modern juristic thinkers, such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1898) and his student Muḥammad Abdu (1849-1906)<sup>384</sup>. In place of blind imitation, they suggested independent interpretation of Islam in the light of modern scientific circumstances and social changes.<sup>385</sup> The result of this trend led contemporary jurists to re-examine the original sources of Islam and to attempt an adaptation of Islam to the modern situation. Therefore they have tended to give a more independent interpretation of the original Divine texts than those of the classical authorities.<sup>386</sup>

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384 - Muslim reformer, born in Egypt. He was associated with al-Afghani and Iqbāl who attempted to reinterpret Islam in the light of the modern world. In 1888 he became Grand Mufti (chief judge) of Egypt. He influenced the modern development of Azhar University in Cairo. He published his great book "*The Message of Unity*" (*Risalat al-Tawḥīd*) in 1897.

385 - Nasir, *The Islamic Law of Personal Status*, p. 4.

386 - Christopher A. Furlow, "The Islamization of Knowledge: Philosophy, Legitimation, and Politics", *Social Epistemology*, 1996, vol. 10, no: 3/4, p. 261.

## B- THE COMPANIONS' WISDOM AS A FOUNDATION FOR ISLAMIC LAW:

As the fundamental aspects of the wisdom of the Prophet have been covered in the previous chapter, under this heading I will examine the wisdom of the companions, as a foundation for Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

The instruction of the companions begins through the revelation of the Qur'ān, which both answered some of their direct questions and dealt with the emerging needs of the Muslim society. The Qur'ān states: "They ask you concerning fighting in the Sacred Months. Say "Fighting therein is a great (transgression) but a greater (transgression) in the sight of God is to prevent mankind from following the way of God to disbelieve in Him, to prevent access to *Masjid al-Harām* (at Mecca), and to drive out its inhabitants, an *al-fitna* (polytheism and to disbelieve) is worse than killing..."<sup>387</sup> Another similar verse states: "They ask you about wine and gambling. Say there is great evil in them as well as benefit to man. But the evil is greater than the benefit."<sup>388</sup> In adapting this type of instructional method, the Qur'ān was in tune with the Arab mind-set of the time, which placed a premium on individual freedom.<sup>389</sup>

The Prophet was a unique example for humankind; however, his application of wisdom was further represented by his companions. Since the Companions witnessed the fresh revelation and were instructed directly by the Prophet, they were in a sense a living extension of the Prophetic wisdom. The Prophet himself emphasised that future generations should take his companions as an example. The following headings will focus on aspects of the dynamic and flexible nature of Islamic juristic concepts, as a result of companions' understanding of wisdom.

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387 - The Qur'ān, 2: 217.

388 - Ibid., 2: 219.

389 - Philips, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, p. 7.



## 1- Wisdom as a practical application of the companions:

After the death of the Prophet the Muslim community allocated his close companions to be their representatives. The Qur'ān states: "You are the best of the peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin right (*ma'rūf*) and forbid wrong (*munkar*)..."<sup>390</sup> It is in regard to such standards that the Muslim community selected its leaders from among the Prophet's closest companions.

The Qur'ān speaks about both the Prophet and his companions as examples for humankind. "Thus we have made you a just nation, that you be witnesses (or example) over humankind and the Messenger be a witness over you, ... Truly, God is full of wisdom (kindness), the Most Merciful towards humankind."<sup>391</sup> In addition, the Prophet stated: "The best generation is my generation and then those who follow them..."<sup>392</sup> Another well known *ḥadīth* reads: "Never will God make my community agree on a wrong course."<sup>393</sup>

If we examine the lives of the closest companions of the Prophet, such as Abū Bakr, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān<sup>394</sup>, 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib, 'Ā'ishā, Salmān al-Fārisī<sup>395</sup>, Abdullāh b. 'Abbās, Mu'ādh b. Jabal, Anas b. Mālik, we can recognise the main characteristics of wisdom in their actions. Therefore the companions of

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390 - The Qur'ān, 3: 110.

391 - Ibid., 2: 143.

392 - Bukhārī, Sahih, Book 57, The Virtues and the Merits of the Companions of the Prophet, chapter 1, hadith no: 3, vol. 5, p. 2.

393 - Sunan Ibn Māja, Al-Ahkam. ḥadīth no: 3940.

394 - 'Uthmān b. 'Affān b. Abu al-'Āṣ b. Umayya. He belonged to the Quraysh tribe. He was born in Mecca and became a Muslim shortly after the appearance of the Prophet. He was rich and spent a lot of his wealth on good causes. He was the third caliph chosen in the year 645. He completed the collection of the Qur'ān. From him 146 ḥadīth were transmitted. He was killed in his house in the year 656.

395 - Companion of the Prophet of Persian origin. He has become one of the most popular figures of Muslim legend.

the Prophet represented living examples of prophetic wisdom, on which Islamic law was later established by succeeding generations.

Of the names cited above Abū Bakr, ‘Umar b. al- Khaṭṭāb, ‘Alī b. Abū Ṭālib and ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān are extremely important in understanding the concept of wisdom, as they were the first four Caliphs of the Muslim community, and therefore applied Islamic law. Their application of Islamic law shows that they obviously understood the Prophetic wisdom.

These Caliphs based their administration on the Sharī‘a and practised *ijtihād* in the spirit of the Qur’ān and the Sunna. In many cases they used their reason or common sense in order to preserve public interest (*maṣlaḥa*). For instance, the second caliph ‘Umar established the treasury.

One of the most important characteristics of these Rightly-Guided Caliphs was their understanding of wisdom and their position within the Islamic legal system. According to these first four caliphs, the Sunna is a dynamic and flexible way of life by which one can apply the sharī‘a. They did not view the Sunna of the Prophet as a rigid and static model of instruction, but rather as a methodology of application due to Qur’anic revelation. This methodology is able to meet the needs of the community in constantly changing circumstances.

The companions of the Prophet always looked for the wisdom contained in the behaviour and words of the Prophet. They often chose the practical approach for the people in their legislation and administration, which can be seen as a continuation of the Prophetic wisdom. However, it is equally true that their applications and *ijtihād* were limited by the sources (*nuṣūṣ*) of Islam, which were laid down in the Qur’ān and the Sunna. This can simply be attributed to the fact that they did not see themselves as law-makers, but they saw themselves as interpreters of the Qur’ān and the Sunna.

The first Caliph Abu Bakr ( c. 570-634)<sup>396</sup> was a good example of one who understood the prophetic wisdom. He was the second to believe in the Prophethood

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396 - Abu Bakr al-Siddīq was the first caliph. He was one of the first male followers of the Prophet, his constant companion and chief advisor. At the prophet’s death in 632, he became the leader of the



of Muḥammad, and was regarded as the closest personal friend of the Prophet. He was a frequent visitor to the house of the Prophet from the earliest days of the Prophet's mission. Through this friendship, he learned the teaching of the Prophet deeply and thoroughly. For this reason he came to be known as the 'faithful' (*ṣiddīq*), since he had unshakeable belief in every aspect of the prophetic mission.

The second caliph, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644), is another important figure who always focused on the targets of the Qur'ān and the Sunna rather than following a static, narrow, literal interpretation. If in his time, the social circumstances put extreme pressure on the conventional application of the Sharī'a 'Umar did not hesitate to apply more or less different practice.<sup>397</sup> However, it does not mean that 'Umar neglected the unchangeable nature of the Islamic *sharī'a*. On the contrary, this shows that he applied the wisdom of the Sharī'a particularly where the Sharī'a was either silent or provided only general principles.

If we look at the time of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, we see almost the same understanding of the relationship between the sources of law and its wide application in daily life. Although the last six years of 'Uthmān's ruling period (645-657) were full of confusion, his first six years (652-657) were successful and he represented a good example of a wise governor. 'Uthmān was a rich merchant and an accomplished man of the world, but lived a humble life. The traditional sources like to represent him as a model of beauty and elegance.<sup>398</sup>

The other important representative of Prophetic wisdom was the Prophet's son-in-law, 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib, who also looked at the wisdom behind the Prophet's Sunna. One incident which occurred when he was on his death bed indicates that he received great wisdom from the Prophet. 'Alī was suffering from a fatal wound and was dying. He was asked if he would allow the nation to accept his elder son Ḥasan

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Muslim community, taking the title "Deputy of the Messenger of God". During his caliphate, he had to deal with what became known as "The War of apostasy".

397 - Daud, *The Concept of Knowledge in Islam*, p. 7.

398 - *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Edited by H. A. R. Gibb, and J. H. Karmers, Leiden, E. J. Brill, p. 615b.

(625-670) as their leader. He replied, "I neither ask you to do so, nor forbid. You can decide according to your wishes."<sup>399</sup> This is reminiscent of 'Umar's attitude who, when asked to nominate a Caliph after him, replied that he could either follow the Prophet and leave the matter open, or follow Abū Bakr and make an appointment; either course of action would be Sunna.<sup>400</sup>

## 2- The religious reflection of prophetic wisdom in his family:

The Prophet's wife, 'Ā'ishā, was called as the representative of the Prophetic wisdom,<sup>401</sup> and the Prophet's uncle 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās was also accepted as one of the good representatives of the prophetic understanding of wisdom. These two were counted amongst the learned and wise people because of their deep understanding of the Qur'ān, and the objectives behind Prophetic wisdom, and of course because of their kinship to the Prophet.

'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās himself narrated that the Prophet prayed for him and stated, "My God grant him wisdom (deep understanding) of religion."<sup>402</sup> The life of 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās was devoted to acquiring knowledge, not only of *ḥadīth*, but also in a wide variety of areas. He was the most eloquent of men and when he held a conversation, he was the most knowledgeable of men. Muslims believe that as a result of the Prophet's prayer for him, the above mentioned blessing proved to be perfectly true, as Ibn 'Abbās was bestowed by God with a very keen insight into the understanding of the Qur'ān and his interpretations and elucidation are considered to be the most perfect in the *Sharī'a*.<sup>403</sup>

Sa'd b. Abū Waqqās ( d. 674 or 677) described him with these words: "I have never seen someone who was quicker in understanding, who had more knowledge and

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399 - Mawdūdī, The Islamic Law and Constitution, Sixth Edition, p. 225.

400 - Muslim, Sahih, Kitāb al-'Imāra, Chapter DCCLV, ḥadīth no: 4486, vol 3, p. 1013.

401 - Nasir, The Islamic Law of Personal Status, p. 16.

402 - Muslim, Sahih, Kitāb al-Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥāba, chapter, MXXII, ḥadīth no: 6055, p. 1321, vol. iv.

403 - See the footnote from Ṣaḥīḥ-i Muslim, by Imām Muslim, (New Delhi, 1986), vol. 4, p. 1321, ff 2773.



greater wisdom than Ibn ‘Abbās<sup>404</sup>. He added that “Ibn ‘Abbās would speak and ‘Umar would not disregard what he had to say”; for this reason he was known as the learned man of this nation (*umma*). ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās’ reflected extensive authority, with people coming to ask about, and discuss, the Qur’ān and its interpretation, the lawful and the prohibited in Islam (*ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*), *fiqh*, heritage laws, Arabic language, poetry and etymology. His explanations were precise, clear and logical.

The Prophet’s wife ‘Ā’ishā acquired knowledge and insight (wisdom) from the Prophet such as no woman has ever acquired. Much of ‘Ā’ishā’s time was spent learning and acquiring knowledge of God’s guidance in the Qur’ān and the life of the Prophet. Whenever ‘Ā’ishā heard anything which she did not understand, she asked repeatedly until she understood it thoroughly.

As a result of this sincere struggle, she was counted as one of the four people (the others are Abu Hurayra, Abdullāh b. ‘Umar<sup>405</sup>, and Anas b. Mālik who transmitted more than two thousand sayings. What is most important is that her knowledge of *ḥadīth* was passed on in written form by at least three persons including her nephew Urwa, who became one of the greatest scholars of the generation succeeding the companions.

She was proficient not only in the science of Islamic law, but also in medicine (*ṭibb*) and poetry. Many of the senior companions of the Prophet sought and asked her advice concerning questions of inheritance, which required a highly skilled, mathematical mind. She is recorded as one of the earliest scholars of Islam, along with persons like ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Alī and Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās. The Prophet,

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404 - ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib al-Qurayshī al-Hāshimī, Abū al-‘Abbās. He was a great companion and very knowledgeable. He was born in Mecca. He accompanied the Prophet and transmitted from him many traditions. He died in Ṭā’if.

405 - Abdullāh b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-‘Adawī, Abū ‘Abdurrahmān, was the son of ‘Umar al-Khaṭṭāb, a Companion of the Prophet and a very pious man. With his father he migrated to Madīna and attended faṭḥ Mecca. He also took part in the conquest of Syria, Iraq and Egypt. He was born and died in Mecca. He gave *ijtihād* for a period of 60 years. Books of *ḥadīth* recorded his 2630 *ḥadīth*.

referring to her extensive knowledge of Islam, is reported to have said: “Learn a portion of your religion (*dīn*) from this red coloured lady.”<sup>406</sup>

Because of the strength of her personality she was a leader in every field, in knowledge, in society, in politics, and even in war. ‘Ā’ishā set an example in promoting education, in particular the education of Muslim women and children, whom she would take, some of them as orphans, into her house, and train them under her care and guidance. Her house thus became a school and academy of religious and moral teaching.<sup>407</sup>

In addition to the above figures, Salmān al-Fārisī is also an important example of Islamic wisdom in action. The Prophet once said “Salmān is a member of my family.” In fact, Salmān was not any relation to the Prophet and he was not even an Arab. As can be seen from his name, he was a Persian,<sup>408</sup> who was brought to Arabia as a slave.<sup>409</sup>

After the Prophet’s immigration to Madina, Salmān converted to Islam. What is important about his life is that Salmān is said to have learned about at least four religions in depth Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, In addition, he

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406 - Red-coloured was an epithet given to ‘Ā’ishā by the Prophet.

407 - Most of the information concerning the wisdom of the companions has been derived from Alim Program (CD).

408 - Salmān’s father was a Zoroastrian priest who lived near Iṣfahān, and was a man of authority. Salmān himself was a devoted Zoroastrian. Although he was the only child of his parents and deeply loved by them, he escaped from their house with the intention of going to Syria and converting to Christianity. At the end of his first journey in search of truth he arrived at Syria and joined the church where he was surprised at their kindness and hospitality towards him. During the day he served the church and at night he would pray and learn the rituals of the church. However, one day one of the pious bishops stated that the seal of the Prophethood would come from Arabia. Therefore Salmān started his second journey towards Arabian still in search of the truth, to meet the last Prophet and to live under his guidance. However, at the Arabia border the leader of the caravan sold young Salmān to a Jew as a slave. He worked there for a while and then it was announced that he was sold to his master’s cousin. He was taken to Madina. This is how Salmān went to Madina before the Prophet migrated there. (The Long Search, by Khurram Murad, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1984).

409 - The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Edited by Cyril Glassé, p. 350.



also lived in the cultural atmosphere of ancient Iranians, Syrians and Arabs. He was searching consciously for the truth. When the Prophet listened to the story of Salmān as a long search for the true faith, in Abū Ayyūb's house on the first night of his immigration, he was impressed.

The Prophet and his companions secured Salmān's freedom from slavery. Salmān was the one who brought forward the idea of defending Madina from the attack of the clans allied with the Quraysh by the digging of a trench (*khandaq*) around the city. Until the end of his life he served Islam as one of the most important, wise and learned figures.<sup>410</sup>

It is narrated that during the first year after immigration (*hijra*) there were friendly arguments between Muhājirūn and Anṣār regarding Salmān whether he was a Muhājir, an immigrant, or an Anṣār. The Muhājirs argued, "Salmān is one of us! He comes all the way from Persia; if that is not an immigrant, we would like to know what an immigrant is!" The Anṣār replied with much indignation: "Salmān, an immigrant? Of course not. He was already living in Madina before the Prophet came. So of course he is an Anṣār, one of us." Because of these debates, the Prophet declared that "Salmān is a member of my family." However, Salmān's wisdom was evident again when he stated, "I am Salmān, a son of Islam."<sup>411</sup>

Because of Salmān's experiences deep meditation, search for the truth and closeness to the Prophet he became one of the representatives of the Prophetic wisdom. After the Prophet died, the companions respected him and always asked his opinions in difficult situations and conflicts. Also many Sufi orders trace their origin to Salmān due to his humble, pious life, awareness of wisdom and his closeness to the Prophet.

In conclusion we can say that the Divinely revealed wisdom, or Prophetic wisdom, can be seen in the life of the companions, since the Qur'ān was interpreted by them, and Islam applied to their life as a whole by the Prophet. Since wisdom is the dynamic framework, to clarify the Islamic wisdom in Law one should focus on the Prophet's companions' application of Islamic wisdom, and remember that he, the

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410 - Ibid.

411 - Murad, *The Long Search*, p. 43.

Prophet, informed people that he was sent to humankind not with scriptural written commands alone, but also with wisdom and understanding.

Therefore the basic guideline of *fiqh* as the true understanding and dynamic structure of Islam can be found in the companions' way of life, and in particular the practice of the first four caliphs and his family such as Abbas and 'Ā'isha. Thus, Islamic jurisprudence was guided by wisdom understanding, from which both the method and objectives of Islamic jurisprudence can be discovered and applied correctly.

### C- THE PLACE OF WISDOM IN ISLAMIC LAW:

As defined in the previous chapter, Islamic wisdom *ḥikma* is the practical application of the Divine revelation by the Prophet Muḥammad through his personal conduct which is an example for the Muslim community. As with wisdom, Islamic Jurisprudence (*fiqh*) means the understanding or knowledge of how to derive details of Islamic law from the commandments of the Qur'ān and Sunna.

If we compare these two concepts, wisdom (*ḥikma*) and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), it becomes evident that they have a similar meaning and similar objectives. The similarity between the two stems from the fact that both of them tend to focus on the deeper meaning of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, thereby deriving details of Islamic law for the purpose of practical application. According to Ibn al-Qayyim (1292-1350) the real goal in Islamic law is to reach wisdom and welfare, to practice Islamic commandments, both individually and collectively.<sup>412</sup>

Although the main body of Islamic law is seen as immutable owing to its Divine origin, some dynamic parts of Islamic legislation can be changed or adapted, in relation to new social and physical conditions. For this reason, some scholars such as N. J. Coulson, H.A.R. Gibbs, H.J. Liebesny, M. Khadduri, H. Lammens, G. Makdisi, and J.N.D. Anderson, have accepted that Islamic law is immutable and

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412 - Ibn Qayyim, *Ī'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, Cairo 1955, quoted from "Islam", by Khurshid Aḥmad, p.176.



constant, because of its Divine origin.<sup>413</sup> In contrast to this, it contains within it a flexible and dynamic character by which analogical methodology in particular and some other dynamic methods have ensured a progressive methodology within Islamic Jurisprudence.

Thus, the practice of law in Islam has an organic nature that evolves and changes just like humans.<sup>414</sup> Achieving this evolving continuity within the Muslim community requires the existence of a dynamic and flexible understanding. This was manifested through Islamic wisdom, which cannot be understood without an awareness of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, as well as the practical application of the companions who understood both the Qur'ān and the Sunna under the guidance of the Prophet.

Thus, wisdom is needed to establish Islamic law as the practical application of revealed knowledge. The Qur'ān confirms this in the following verses, "It is not for a believer, man or woman, when God and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys God and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error."<sup>415</sup> The main differences between the Qur'ān and wisdom (*ḥikma*) is that while the Qur'ān is the actual word of God in a written form, wisdom is revealed to the Prophet by the meaning. Thus the Prophet put theoretical commands into practice through revealed wisdom as a dynamic manifestation.

### 1- Wisdom as the dynamism of Islamic law:

Muslim scholars believe that Islamic law accords with human nature and social changes, and for this reason Islamic law (*Sharī'a*) is valid for all times to come.<sup>416</sup>

In this respect, the following Qur'anic verse may be cited as an indication of the continuity of Islamic law, "It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance

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413 - Masud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy*, A Study of Abū Ishāq al-Ṣhāṭibī's Life and Thought, p. 7.

414 - Mawil Izzi Dien, *Festschrift*, C. E. Bosworth, Edited by Prof. I. R. Netton (in press).

415 - The Qur'ān, 33: 36.

416 - Khan, *Islamic Jurisprudence*, p. 25.

and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religion even though the polytheists, (*mushrikūn*) hate (it).<sup>417</sup> Upon examination of the above verse, some argue that it establishes the inviolability of the Islamic law for all time, and no one can oppose this authority of the Divine Law in an Islamic state.<sup>418</sup> In this respect, Muḥammad Asad stressed that “the concept of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ have meanings that do not change from case to case, or from time to time, but retain their validity for all times and all conditions.”<sup>419</sup>

To clarify the continuity of Islamic law, Nyazee likened it to a tree which is the best example to explain the progression of Islamic Law. “The seed of this tree was shown in the hearts and minds of men, fourteen hundred years ago by Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh. Since then it has taken root, grown, and spread its branches on all sides. With each passing century, the tree grows in size. Its evolution and growth never stop. Its spreading branches cast their shade on all sides covering different cultures, peoples, and races. Like the trunk of this tree, Islamic law has a part that is fixed, and like its branches and leaves, the law has a part that changes in shape and colour in every season. The fixed part of this tree is closer to the roots and cutting this part is likely to damage the tree itself. Like the trunk of this tree, the fixed part of Islamic law has grown directly from its roots or sources. Changing this fixed part will affect the nature of the legal system. Like the flexible part of the law has been changing with the times, sometimes yielding abundant fruit, sometimes less.”<sup>420</sup>

Therefore the flexible part of Islamic law, represented by the secondary sources, such as *qiyās ijmā’*, *maṣlaḥa*, *istiḥsān istiṣlāḥ*. These flexible parts of Islamic law were maintained by the jurists in accordance with time and the changing needs of society. The result of this natural development of Islamic law Boer fruit in the history of Islam under the guidance of wisdom. Therefore, to continue the

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417 - The Qur’ān, 9: 33.

418 - Rahman, Islam Ideology and the Way of Life, p. 351.

419 - Asad, The Principles of State and Government in Islam, p. 2.

420 - Nyazee, Theories of Islamic Law, p. 53.



development of Islamic law in a manner that takes account of new situations, a dynamic understanding was needed. This was achieved through the use of reason ('*illa*) and wisdom, which formed a practical application to ensure continuity in change.

a- Wisdom and the purposes of Islamic law (*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a*): Although there are differences of opinion among Muslim jurists as to whether *ḥikma* can be used as a proof (*dalīl*) to extend the rule (*ḥukm*) or not, it is generally accepted that wisdom is one of the main purposes or spirit of Islamic law.<sup>421</sup> The most important function of the fixed part of the law is to achieve its ultimate objectives (*maqāṣid al-sharī'a*), through which the dynamic nature of the law can blossom and bear fruit as a civilisation.

The purposes of law are also divided by Ghazālī into two types: the Divine (*dīnī*), and worldly (*dunyawī*). Each of these includes *taḥṣīl*, benefit, and *ibqā'*, the repelling of harm (*maḍarra*). However, these two do not depend on human reason, but constitute what the lawgiver has considered to be of benefit and harm. The worldly purposes are further divided into four types: the preservation of life (*nafs*), the preservation of progeny, (*nasl*), the preservation of intellect ('*aqḥ*), and the preservation of wealth (*māl*). These five purposes are designated as necessities (*ḍarūrāt*), and are the primary purposes of the law.<sup>422</sup>

However, many Muslim scholars have claimed that one of the main purposes of Islamic law is to reach wisdom, since it is the foundation of Islamic law. In his comprehensive and unique book *al-Muwāfaqāt*, Abū Iṣḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388) gave details of the rulings of the *Sharī'a* through the philosophy/ *ḥikma* and objectives of *tashrī'*. On the same subject Ibn al-Qayyim, in his book *I'lām*, also emphasised the importance of wisdom; "The basis of the *Sharī'a* is wisdom, and the welfare of the people in this world as well as the Hereafter. This welfare lies in complete justice, mercy, and wisdom: anything that departs from justice to

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421 - Ibid., p. 317.

422 - Ibid., pp. 213, 214.

oppression, from mercy to harshness, from welfare to misery, and from wisdom to folly, has nothing to do with the *Sharī'a*.”<sup>423</sup>

*Sharī'a* wisdom may be characterised by its tendency of not giving detailed instructions on social matters, which is often influenced by human physiology. This was supported by the fact that the *Sharī'a* honoured (owned) the customs of society, under the Divine framework of Islamic law in the form of *ijtihād*. Therefore, *ijtihād* is the essential dynamic force of the Islamic system. However, for a jurist to make an *ijtihād* he needs to know the cause (*'illa*) of the texts as this is the main premise of the analogical process.

b- Wisdom and cause (*'illa*): The majority of Muslim jurists believe that rules can be discovered for every situation faced by human beings, because nothing has been left out of the texts of the Qur'ān and the Sunna. This idea is a direct result of the following verses of the Qur'ān: “...We have neglected nothing in the book...”<sup>424</sup> However, this does not mean that all the rules exist in detail in the Islamic sources, but rather that the law found in the texts can be extended to all areas of human activity through the general principles. Therefore, the main aim of Islamic jurisprudence is to establish the rule of derivation of Islamic law from the Qur'ān and the Sunna. To do this, Islamic jurisprudence starts by identifying the underlying premises of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, from which the law can be extended.

In his book “Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence”, Hashim Kamali states: “Broadly speaking, *'illa* refers to the rationale of an injunction, and in this sense it is synonymous with *ḥikma*, that is, the purpose and objective of the law.” He also argued that the majority of Muslim jurists distinguish the effective cause (*'illa*) from the objective (*ḥikma*) of the Islamic law. Therefore, “*'illa* is permanent and unchangeable, while *ḥikma* is not constant.”<sup>425</sup>

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423 - Ibn Qayyim, *Ī'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, Cairo 1955, Quoted from *Islam*, by Khurshid Ahmad, p.176.

424 - The Qur'ān, 6: 38.

425 - Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, p. 207.



Although according to some jurists, there is no distinction between *'illa* and *ḥikma*, some others do not accept *ḥikma* as an *'illa* because of its subjective nature. The second group also argue that *'illa* gives security for the *ḥikma* most of the time, but not always, because *ḥikma* in the law is often a hidden quality which cannot always be recognised by the senses. For this reason, it is claimed that it would be a mistake if a judge, for example, gave permission for the right of pre-emption to a person who is neither a partner nor a neighbouring owner, because in this case *'illa* was not mentioned in the Islamic sources and *ḥikma* is not always satisfactory for giving correct decisions.<sup>426</sup> Therefore, it would not be safe to build up an analogy on this flexible base, because *ḥikma* is not constant according to the Ḥanafīs.<sup>427</sup>

However, the most satisfactory explanation of the concept of *'illa* is found in Ghazālī's juristic writings, under the heading of *ḥukm* and reasoning. According to Ghazālī there are four steps to conclude a *qiyās*, which are the following; *aṣl*, the root on which analogy is made, *far'*, the branch for which analogy is sought; *'illa*, the reason on the basis of which analogy is made; *ḥukm*, the judgement to which the analogy leads. However, *'illa* here is not the cause which philosophy defines, but refers to the term 'sign'. Also, *'illa* in these contexts can be determined from Islamic sources, the Qur'ān, Sunna and *ijmā'*, rather than reason itself.<sup>428</sup>

Ghazālī recommended two methods for the recognition of the effective (*'illa*). Firstly, the text itself indicates the underlying cause, either directly or indirectly. Secondly, if there is no direct way found in the Qur'ān and the Sunna or by consensus, *'illa* may be derived through a subjective method. Ghazālī argued that the derived *'illa* based on reflection as a subjective method is called *istinbāt*, a method over which Muslim jurists have disagreed. Ghazālī also argued that the generalisation of such a cause can be applied only if the following two conditions are met: these derived principles should conform to the purposes of the law (*munāsib*), and they should not clash with the general practices of the law

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426 - Ibid., p. 208.

427 - Nyazee, Theories of Islamic Law, pp. 141.

428 - Ghazālī, al-Muṣṭaṣfā min 'ilm al-Uṣūl, Baghdad 1294 (A. H.) vol. II, pp. 230, 295 ff.

(*mulā'amah*). By imposing these conditions, Ghazālī restricts the uncontrolled usage of *ḥikma* for the derivation of a principle.<sup>429</sup>

According to Kamali, the pre-emption (*shuf'*) is a good example to illustrate the differences between the two. The owner of real property has priority in buying the property, whenever his partner or his neighbour wishes to sell it. 'Illa for this rule is joint ownership itself, whilst *ḥikma* is to protect the partner or neighbour against possible harm that may arise from sale to a third person.<sup>430</sup>

It can be observed that although this derived 'illa or *ḥikma* is a subjective matter, it is quite important because of the wide range of Islamic law derived either directly from this foundation or indirectly from the spirit of this understanding. Therefore, Muslim jurists should understand the purposes of Islamic law and textual reasoning, in order to identify the legal rules. The process of this discovery should be within the framework of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, and under the light of wisdom (*ḥikma*).

## 2- Reflection on some secondary sources as types of wisdom:

In general, law can be seen as a base for the needs of society, established by a high authority to organise the means of life and human rights. The following verses of the Qur'ān indicate this, "Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) order for prayers (*ṣalāt*), to pay poor due (*zakāt*), and they enjoin right (*ma'rūf*) and forbid wrong (*munkar*)..."<sup>431</sup> Muslim jurists have seen in this statement the aim of the Lawgiver. In this connection, Muslims believe that humans are both the servants and representatives of God on this earth, who obey the Laws of God.

As a result of this understanding, Muslim jurists have expounded and elaborated the fixed part of the law, which is laid down in the Qur'ān and the Sunna, and left the development of the flexible and changeable part to the ruler, who has applied it in accordance with time and circumstances. To attain this flexibility and adaptability

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429 - Nyazee, Theories of Islamic law, pp. 221-223.

430 - Kamali, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, p. 207.

431 - The Qur'ān, 22: 41.



of the dynamic part of Islamic law, the early Muslim jurists accepted other sources along with the Qur'ān and the Sunna. They started with consensus (*ijmā'*) and analogy (*qiyās*), and through these jurists were able to apply Islamic Law to the changing needs of society.

However, as a derivation method *qiyās* and consensus (*ijmā'*) themselves were limited methods a part from the concept of *ḥikma* because *ḥikma* is the ultimate objective of the Islamic law<sup>432</sup>. To achieve these purposes Muslim jurists, besides these four main sources, have established other methods and concepts which are derived from the spirit of the Qur'ān and the Sunna. Among these concepts are: *ma'rūf, istiḥsān, Istiṣlāḥ, maṣlaḥa* and *sadd al-dharā'i'* all of which can be counted as representative of wisdom understanding in Islamic law. Among these *istiḥsān* was used by Ḥanafīs and Mālikīs, whereas *istiṣḥāb* was used by the Shāfi'ī, and *istiṣlāḥ* by the Mālikī schools of law.

To achieve this task, the scholars who established these secondary sources were not entirely independent from the Qur'ān and the Sunna. In fact, they used the indications of these main sources as a guide to the objectives of the *Sharī'a*. To ensure the validity of such secondary sources or concepts, Muslim jurists accepted two main conditions: first, such concepts should not disagree with the spirit of Islam in general, and also they should not contradict well known reliable custom or reason.

Among the above concepts, *maṣlaḥa* is particularly important in reaching the dynamism of Islamic law, for the purpose of public interest and welfare. For this reason, all Islamic schools have adapted *maṣlaḥa*, either by name or by meaning, into their legal system. For instance, for the Shāfi'īs, *maṣlaḥa* was accepted as one form of analogy, while the Ḥanafīs under the concept of *istiḥsān*, Mālikīs and Ḥanbalīs under the heading of *maṣlaḥa* tended to reach the practical objectives of Islamic law through their *ijtihād*.<sup>433</sup>

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432 - Kamali, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, p. 207.

433 - Mawil Izzi Dien, Festschrift, C. E. Bosworth, Edited by Prof. I. R. Netton (in press).

a- *Maṣlaḥa* (public interest): The theory of 'interests' is discussed in great detail in the works of Muslim jurists like Ghazālī and al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388). Strictly speaking *maṣlaḥa*, like *manfa'a*, means 'utility', but generally speaking *maṣlaḥa* denotes 'welfare'. However, it is used by jurists to mean "general good" or "public interest".<sup>434</sup> In that respect, *maṣlaḥa* can be regarded as a principle of adaptability of Islamic Law. Kamali claimed that *maṣlaḥa* is the basic purpose of all the rules of *Sharī'a*, and in this way it would be proper to base analogy on the *ḥikma*.<sup>435</sup>

The reference for *maṣlaḥa* can be taken directly in Islam, because Islam seeks to establish benefits for the welfare of the community. In this respect, Ghazālī defined *maṣlaḥa* as the ultimate purpose of *Sharī'a* by which the rights of citizens of the Islamic state can be protected, in relation to their religion, life, offspring, reason and property, as viewed universal human rights.<sup>436</sup> Therefore, public interest, *maṣlaḥa*, is a fundamental aim of *Sharī'a* that contributes to the progression of Islamic law.<sup>437</sup>

According to Ghazālī, *'illa* can be achieved in three ways: explicit (*ṣarīḥ*), implicit (*īmā'*) and deducted (*istinbāḥ*). The last of these, *istinbāḥ*, can be divided into two categories: observation and classification (*al-sabr wa'l-taqṣīm*) and affinity (*munāsaba*).<sup>438</sup> *Maṣlaḥa* appeared under this last title as the main element of *munāsaba*. If *munāsib* is neither suitable nor supported by the textual evidence, it is called *istiḥsān*, which means to make the law according to personal discretion. However, according to Ghazālī when the *munāsib* can be indirectly concluded from the text without textual evidence, it is called *istiṣlāḥ*. *Maṣlaḥa* is represented by this reasoning tool.<sup>439</sup>

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434 - Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 6, p. 738-b.

435 - Kamali, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, p. 208.

436 - Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 6, p. 739-a.

437 - Mawil Izzi Dien, *Maṣlaḥa*, Festschrift, C. E. Bosworth, Edited by Prof. I. R. Netton (in press).

438 - Ghazālī, *al-Muṣṭaṣfā min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, Baghdad 1294 (A. H.), vol. II, p. 295ff.

439 - Masud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy, A Study of Abū Ishāq al-Ṣhāṭibī's Life and Thought*, pp. 155, 156.



Shāṭibī defined *maṣlaḥa* as follows: “*Maṣlaḥa* concerns the subsistence of human life, the completion of man’s livelihood, and the acquisition of what his emotional and intellectual qualities require, in an absolute sense.”<sup>440</sup> However, Shāṭibī divides the objectives (*maqāṣid*) or *maṣāliḥ* into *ḍarūrī* (necessary), needed (*ḥājī*) and commendable (*taḥsīnī*). The first one is called *ḍarūrī* because it is indispensable in sustaining the *maṣāliḥ*, both in this world and hereafter. The *ḍarūrī* category consists of the following five aspects; religion (*dīn*), self (*nafs*), family (*nash*), property (*māl*) and intellect (*‘aql*). The second category is called *ḥājīyāt*, which are the interests or objectives needed in human life. If the *ḥājīyāt* are not taken into consideration along with *ḍarūrīyāt*, the people on the whole will face hardship. For instance in *‘ibādāt*, concessions in *ṣalāt* and fasting (*ṣawm*) can be benefited from *ḥājīyāt* in certain circumstances, such as sickness or journey.<sup>441</sup>

The third category, *taḥsīnīyāt*, means to adopt what conforms to the best of customs (*‘adāt*), and to avoid those manners which are rejected by common sense. Kamali argued that *taḥsīnīyat*, also known as *kamāliyyāt*, denoted interests whose realisation leads to improvement and the attainment of that which is desirable.<sup>442</sup> For example, in *‘ibādāt*, cleanliness (*tahāra*) or decency in covering the private parts of the body in prayer (*ṣatr*); in *‘adāt*, etiquette table manners. In *mu‘āmalāt*, prohibition is placed on the sale of unclean (*najis*) articles, or the sale of surplus food and water.<sup>443</sup>

However, for the application of *maṣlaḥa* as a final purpose of Islamic law, Muslims need state power and authority to protect human rights, and the basic freedom of individuals. *Maṣlaḥa*’s scope can be taken here as a balance between community and individual rights. For this reason, the Islamic State develops virtues such as goodness, peace and prosperity among its members, to prevent their lives from being disrupted.

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440 - Shāṭibī, al-Muwāfaqāt, Cairo, vol. II, p. 25.

441 - Ibid., vol. II, pp. 8-10.

442 - Kamali, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, p. 272.

443 - Shāṭibī, al-Muwāfaqāt, Cairo, vol. 2, pp. 11- 12.

b- *Ma'rūf*: In Islamic law *Ma'rūf*, as the second dynamism of Islamic wisdom, is good common sense. Literally it means what is generally accepted by the noble side of human intelligence, what fulfils the demands of justice, and what is totally accepted by the righteous people in society. The human experience leads to a positive approach to wisdom, because it is found that ethical concepts such as justice and morality are more beneficial for humans. That is why many legal systems accept good values for their community.<sup>444</sup> For some matters the Qur'ān has commanded Muslims to decide according to well-known customs of society. Because of this, many commentators of the Qur'ān have defined *ma'rūf* as embracing a general application of the communities.

Significantly, the Qur'ān uses the word *ma'rūf*, instead of other terms which would convey the sense of usage or custom. However, this *ma'rūf* should not be identified only with the Arab community of that time; one should also accept other communities' *ma'rūf* as a reliable custom if they are not in disagreement with the Qur'ān and the Sunna. I shall quote here a few verses of the Qur'ān concerning *ma'rūf*. "It is prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you, if he leaves wealth, that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin, according to reasonable manners (*ma'rūf*). (This is) a duty upon the pious (*muttaqūn*)."<sup>445</sup> "The mothers shall give suck to their children for two years, (that is) for those (parents) who desire to complete the term of sucking, but the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis...."<sup>446</sup> "And try orphans until they reach the age of marriage;...if then you find sound judgement in them, release their property to them...but if he is poor, let him have for himself what is just and reasonable (according to his work)..."<sup>447</sup> Thus, the Qur'ān shows that the main purpose of wisdom is to reach a high moral code of

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444 - Ibid., pp. 78, 79.

445 - The Qur'ān, 2: 180.

446 - Ibid., 2: 233.

447 - Ibid., 4: 6.



conduct and create a happy community based upon the Divine revelation, and also the general consensus of the community.

c- *Sadd al-dharā'i'*: *Sadd al-dharā'i'* is a concept that means to close the gates to evil and unpermissible acts. It is like road signs, which warn of the dangerous and unlawful areas to safeguard against unlawful actions. Thus *sadd al-dharā'i'* assists in the application of *maṣlaḥa*, through what can be described as a negative approach, by blocking the way of committing sin.<sup>448</sup>

d- *Istiṣlāḥ*: In place of *maṣlaḥa*, some jurists used the concept of *Istiṣlāḥ* as a kind of legal reasoning, based on the general meaning of the text. This distinguishes between the broader principle of *maṣlaḥa* and other principles that permit a more flexible type of analogy as compared to *qiyās*.<sup>449</sup>

e- *Istiḥsān*: *Istiḥsān* is choosing between two different analogies (*qiyās*). In other words, *istiḥsān* is the method by which jurists can show a preference (*tarjīḥ*) between two possible conclusions. If there is no textual base for the cases, the jurist give their independent *ijtihād*, according to the general principles of law and choose one of the two possible conclusions. Thus, both *istiḥsān* and *Istiṣlāḥ*, like analogy, are neither a source nor a concept; they are only logical and experiential tools by which one can achieve the objective of Islamic law.<sup>450</sup>

### 3- Wisdom on the application of Law:

Since wisdom is a practical knowledge more than theoretical, it requires to apply the court cases by the *qāḍī* (judge). Hence the qualifications of a *qāḍī* mentioned by the scholars mostly depended on inferences and deductions. In this respect a *qāḍī* has to deal with two questions, question of law and questions of fact. Therefore while law requires knowledge, facts requires wisdom. Even some scholars stressed that much wisdom with little knowledge is more advantageous than much knowledge with little wisdom. Parallel to this Ḥanafī scholars have allowed

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448 - Mawil Izzi Dien, Festschrift, C. E. Bosworth, Edited by Prof. I. R. Netton (in press).

449 - Nyazee, Theories of Islamic Law, p. 320.

450 - Mawil Izzi Dien, Festschrift, C. E. Bosworth, Edited by Prof. I. R. Netton (in press).

appointment of an illiterate person to the office of *qāḍī* provided such a man is bestowed with gift of knowledge and deep understanding.<sup>451</sup>

Because of this for Prophet Joseph, the chief *qāḍī* of Egypt, the Qur'ān stated that, he has given knowledge and wisdom: "...We gave him (Joseph) wisdom (*ḥikma*) and knowledge, thus We reward the doers of good..."<sup>452</sup> Similar to this David was also bestowed with kingdom and wisdom, and other place kingdom, wisdom and sound judgement. "So they routed them by God's leave and David killed Goliath, and God gave him (David) the kingdom and wisdom, and taught him of that which He willed..."<sup>453</sup> "We made his (David) kingdom strong and gave him wisdom and sound judgement in speech and decision."<sup>454</sup>

### Conclusion:

It becomes clear from this model of understanding that Islamic wisdom (*ḥikma*) was communicated to the Prophet, together with revelation as a foundation of Islamic law, upon which the Islamic legal system could be built. However, wisdom (*ḥikma*) is not the Islamic law, as some scholars have claimed, but rather the method of applying that law in a just and compassionate way. Perhaps it is for this reason that the Qur'ān does not offer as detailed a definition of the concept of wisdom as some might expect. Instead the Qur'ān points to the person of the Prophet Muḥammad as the living example of applied wisdom.

The Prophet himself solved the conflicts of his era and established a balanced society on the ground of the Divine belief, ethics and wisdom. The Muslim jurists have understood *ijtihād* according to these precepts and the Prophet's Sunna, in teaching various legal problems and finding solutions for them. Thus, wisdom is both the dynamic method and the purpose of *ijtihād*, using the Qur'ān and the Sunna as the guiding principles.

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451 - Azad, Judicial System of Islam, p. 30, 32.

452 - Ibid., The Qur'ān, 12: 22.

453 - Ibid., 2: 251.

454 - Ibid., 38: 20.



If we examine the above concepts concerning Islamic law, it becomes apparent that they are the natural result of Qur'anic wisdom through the Prophet's practice. Among the above concepts, *maṣlaḥa* lays down the principles by which rulers can apply *Sharī'a* for the public interest and welfare, rather than in a strict and narrow sense. On such a basis, the companions established Islamic legislation. This tendency was maintained later on by Muslim jurists as a lively, flexible and practical application of Islamic law.

Therefore, wisdom (*ḥikma*) should be sought from the Sunna of the Prophet, which has been interpreted and applied by the companions and Islamic law is based on this wisdom. It is clear that to apply Islamic law for the new circumstances of modern times one should place Islamic wisdom at the centre of *ijtihād*, as the brain of Islamic law (*Sharī'a*).

Thus, the satisfactory application of wisdom first requires theoretical knowledge, both on the objectives of law, and the divisions therein and particularly of the flexible and fixed aspects. On top of this, one can conclude that the satisfactory application of Islamic law requires the establishment of an Islamic state because only in such a state can Islamic religion, ethics, and law reach a final fulfilment in harmony with the main goal of wisdom.

In short, Islamic jurisprudence derives its energy from the understanding of wisdom, by which both the method and the objectives of Islamic law can be identified and applied correctly. By using Islamic wisdom, Muslims as individuals can fulfil the aim of establishing a satisfactory social and cultural system.

## CHAPTER VI

### WISDOM IN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

#### Introduction:

The first historians of Muslim philosophers were European oriental scholars. They possessed quite a detailed knowledge of the Arabic language and consequently tended to confine their studies to those historical works written in this language only. It is due to this self imposed methodological limitation that most of the early historians of Islamic philosophy utilised the term 'Arab philosophy' in place of 'Islamic philosophy'. Unfortunately this approach entails a grow misunderstanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity within the Islamic philosophical tradition. Although it is true that the main philosophical studies were written in Arabic, there have also been considerable philosophical works in Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and various other languages which have been valuable contributions to the field as a whole.<sup>455</sup>

Thus to approach the subject of 'Philosophy in the Muslim World' it will be of far greater benefit to apply the terms "Muslim Philosophy" or "Islamic Philosophy" rather than "Arab philosophy" because these terms do not limit the subject area in terms of geographical factors. Furthermore this approach is sensitive to the particularities of philosophers differing modes of thought as these were influenced by locality and time.

One of the main characteristics of Islamic philosophy is that, unlike the Medieval Christian scholastic philosophy, Islam did not recognise any mediators between God and the believer. In other words there is no official religious class who hold the right to interpret the Qur'ān and Sunna. Therefore no orthodoxy exists in Islamic philosophy which can force its view into the forms of particular school.<sup>456</sup>

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455 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 218.

456 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, Classical Islamic Philosophy, pp. 11, 12.



The second characteristic of Islamic philosophy is to be an eclectic nature. When the Muslims conquered Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia in the seventh century A.D. these lands had already been Hellenised by the well established philosophical and religious schools such as Harran, Jundishapūr and Antioch (Antāqiya).<sup>457</sup> However, in these schools Eastern wisdom understanding and religious ideas such as Persian and Indian wisdom had been mixed with Greek philosophy together with Christian theology. Generally, the Muslim conquest did not oppose the academic functions of these schools and their masters. Rather they benefited from the experience of these schools.<sup>458</sup>

Therefore Islamic philosophy, as a theoretical wisdom or theosophy includes religion (Islam), philosophy and ancient way of life. These three major element mixed in a systematic teaching. Although there are many definitions of Islamic philosophy Netton in his book *Seek Knowledge* gives such a brilliant definition which includes all the fundamentals of Islamic philosophy. "... (Islamic Philosophy) as a mode of intellectual inquiry in Islamic thought which at various times placed a primary on reason, which drew on both the Western and the Eastern traditions for its vocabulary and, often, content, but which was much more than a mere syncretism composed of the aforementioned influences. Of course, such a definition is open to argument, elaboration or, indeed, contradiction but what cannot be denied is that one of the 'signs' or basic characteristics of *falsafa* in Islam is stress on *reason*."<sup>459</sup>

Thus, to examine and explain Islamic philosophy as a kind of theoretical wisdom one should be aware of the main sources of Islamic philosophy, namely Hellenistic philosophy and original Islamic sources, the Qur'ān and the Sunna, and finally Eastern knowledge incorporating Persian and Indian wisdom.

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457 - Radhkrishnan, *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, vol. II, p. 121.

458 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 2.

459 - Netton, *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the House of Islam*, p. 47.

## A- THE SOURCES OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY (*FALSAFA*)

### 1- The Qur'ān and Sunna:

The Qur'ān and the traditions (Sunna) of the Prophet Muḥammad are indispensable for understanding the values and principles of Muslims, since they believe that life should revolve around these two foundations. In addition to these two main Islamic sources there are some other proofs or bases such as practices of ancient prophets, consensus of Muslim scholars and logical analogy (*qiyās*) which are built up again on these two foundations.

The Qur'ān is derived from the root *qara'a*, which means 'to read' or 'to recite'. The Qur'ān is a verbal noun and hence means to 'reading' or 'recitation'.<sup>460</sup> The Qur'ān is also known by other names like the *furqān*, *umm al-kitāb* and *tanzīl*. The term *furqān* literally means the distinguisher between truth and falsehood, good and evil while "*umm al-kitāb*" refers its general premises as a source for detailed information by which one can measure his or her conclusions. The other name *tanzīl* relates a general name for the revelation of the Qur'ān.

Although the Qur'ān is not poetry, its verses are constructed in a powerful rhythmic form. In the Qur'ān we find both mystical and logical knowledge, although in general it is not a philosophical or mystical book. On the contrary the Qur'ān contains its own original message and historical knowledge from which one can derive a foundation of deep philosophical thinking and logical method.

The Qur'ān is concerned not only with the significance of its verses but also addresses itself to many broad problems in the human environment. For instance, the Muslim writer, Seyyed Hossein Nasr argued that the Qur'ān played an important role both in the development of philosophy and scientific thought. But this impact is often neglected by modern scholars, to say nothing of the metaphysical, moral and juridical science contained in it.<sup>461</sup>

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460 - Denffer, *Ulūm-ul Qur'ān*, p. 17.

461 - Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, p. 150.



Muslim philosophers benefited from the Qur'ān and used its verses (*āyāt*) for proof in their study. In this way the Qur'ān affected their thoughts by giving them some basic premises as the starting point of philosophical thinking. Below are some examples from the Qur'ān which invite humans to acquire deep knowledge and clear thinking as the main ground of wisdom and philosophy in Islamic thought.

“We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth...”<sup>462</sup>

“And the example of those who disbelieve, is as that of him who shouts to the (flock of sheep) that hears nothing but calls and cries. (They are) deaf, dumb and blind. So they do not understand.”<sup>463</sup>

“And We have appointed the night and the day as two signs. Then, We have extinguished the sign of the night while We have made the sign of day bright, that you may know the number of the years and the reckoning...”<sup>464</sup>

“Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternations of the night and the day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to making, and the rain which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He scatters therein, and in the wedding of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed signs (*āyāt*), for people of understanding.”<sup>465</sup>

“Verily! In the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for the man of understanding.”<sup>466</sup>

Muslim also believe that the Qur'ān contains many general premises from which people can discover knowledge both of humanity itself and nature. Henry Corbin in

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462 - The Qur'ān, 41: 53.

463 - Ibid., 2: 171.

464 - Ibid., 17: 12.

465 - Ibid., 2: 164.

466 - Ibid., 3: 190.

his book *"History of Islamic Philosophy"*, commented; "It is commonly said in the West that the Qur'ān contains nothing of a mystical or philosophical nature, and that philosophers and mystics are not indebted to it in any way. Our concern here is not to argue about what Westerners find or fail to find in the Qur'ān, but to know what it is that Muslims themselves have actually discovered in it."<sup>467</sup>

However, the Qur'ān cannot be understood in its full implications without the teachings of the Prophet. In other words without a study of the traditions of Muḥammad (Sunna) Muslims would be unable to understand the Qur'ān entirely and their faith would remain incomplete. Thus, the Qur'ān states "And whatsoever the Messenger gives you take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it)..."<sup>468</sup> At the same time the Sunna is vital in providing non-Muslim with a true picture of the Islamic faith and its moral principles. For these reasons we should take reference about knowledge both from the Qur'ān and the traditions of Muḥammad.

The traditions (Sunna) are the application of Divine theoretical knowledge to social life which includes the sayings, actions and approbation of the prophet Muḥammad. Therefore the Qur'ān and the traditions provide Muslims with a world view by which they can try to solve theoretical and practical problems. Thus to clarify the value of knowledge as the foundation of Islamic philosophy one should examine the sayings and practices of the Prophet Muḥammad as the second primary source.

Concerning wisdom and knowledge the Prophet commanded Muslims in general to be either scholars or students.<sup>469</sup> Muslim also believe that to acquire knowledge for one day is better for a person than to pray for sixty years, because worship without knowledge is in some sense different, just as knowledge without analysis also has no benefit.

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467 - Corbin, *History of Islamic philosophy*, p. 2.

468 - The Qur'ān, 59: 7.

469 - Sunan al-Darimi, *al-Muqaddimah*, Ḥatīth no: 250, quoted from *Mawsu'al ḥadīth* (cd-room), by Sharikat al-Sakhr li Baramij al-Hisab, First Edition: Egypt, 1991-1995.



In Islam pursuit of knowledge is incumbent upon every man and woman, and it was recommended to read from birth (cradle) to death (grave).<sup>470</sup> The Prophet did not divide men and women concerning their search for knowledge as stating: "The seeking of knowledge is an obligation laid on every Muslim."<sup>471</sup> In another well known tradition the Prophet stressed that Muslims should seek knowledge even as far as in China. Similar to this it is narrated from the Prophet that the word of wisdom is the lost property of a wise man so he has a better right to it (than any one else) wherever he finds it.<sup>472</sup>

Consequently, the Qur'ān and Sunna are the two main source for Islamic studies and at the same time the measure of Muslim thought. For this reason Muslim philosophers take references from the Qur'ān and the Sunna in support of their ideas.

## 2- Hellenistic Greek philosophy<sup>473</sup> :

After the conquests of Alexander the Great (d. 322 B.C.) Greek philosophy and culture expanded through Asia and Africa. When Alexander died the major part of his empire was divided among his generals; Antigonus ruled Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine; Saljuqs ruled Mesopotamia, Persia and the eastern parts to the borders of India; and Ptolemy,<sup>474</sup> ruled Egypt and Libya.<sup>475</sup>

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470 - Tabrizī, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, By James Rabson, vol. 1 p. 54.

471 -Ibid.

472 - Ibid.

473 - Since the Greek philosophy was already researched in the introduction as Chapter One, here the only translation from Greek philosophy to the Arabic has been detailed as one of the sources of Islamic Philosophy.

474 - Egyptian general Ptolemy (c. 90-168) ruled Egypt and Libya and established a scientific centre which included a museum with library then invited philosophers, scientists, and artisans to Egypt. More than any other Greek scientist he dominated medieval Islamic astronomy, astrology, geography, harmonics and optics.

475 - Hill, *Islamic Science and Engineering*, p. 1.

In the Mediterranean world especially, there were important institutions which included libraries, museums, and scientific centers such as Alexandria (Iskandariyya) and Bergama. In Egypt Ptolemy established scientific centres which included a museum and a library, and then invited philosophers, scientists, and artisans to attend. He also collected Mediterranean philosophical and scientific books in his library. Until the time of Cleopatra 30 B.C. this museum and library<sup>476</sup> played a large role for intellectual study.

In the Mediterranean area the philosophical movement comprised by Zeno (c. 336-264 B.C.) the universal humanist movement; Epicurus (c. 341-270 B.C.) with materialism and hedonism; Philo (c. 30 B.C.- c. 40 A.D.) in the form of Jewish philosophy or the Neoplatonic movement; and by Pyrrho of Elis (c. 365-275 B.C.) with the sceptical philosophy at Plato's Academy. Among these four Groups Neoplatonism had more affect on Christian, Jewish and Muslim philosophies,<sup>477</sup> because of its mystical and religious character.

This early Hellenistic movement centred in the Mediterranean witnessed Greek thought and eastern religions combine to produce a new civilisation and intellectual culture. However, some of the orthodox Christians opposed Origen (c.185-254) since he blended philosophy and Christianity together. For this reason he escaped to Palestine and opened a branch of the Alexandrian school. After that the student and teachers of the Alexandrian school moved to Palestine. In this school the education level was not less than at Alexandria, but it was not as famous as the Alexandrian school.

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476 - There is an historical misconception about this library. Although Abu 'l Frac wrote an account and said that this library was burnt by order of the caliph 'Umar I this cannot be true because when Egypt was taken under the rule of Rome this library had burnt on a fire by the time of Cleopatra. When Muslims conquered Egypt by Amr b. al-'Aş main library had already been burnt and there was only a small church library. [See, Türk-Islam Felsefesi Ders Notlari, (Lecturer notes on Turkish-Islamic Philosophy), Mahmut Kaya, Istanbul, 1984].

476 - The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edward Paul, vol. 3, p. 467.

477 - Ibid.



One significant aspect of movement was that Hellenistic movement was that the Hellenistic philosophy was of a practical rather than purely theoretical nature. For this reason the philosophers looked back on Greek philosophy and significant classic traditions from their past and embraced them as natural science, and medicine. The Hellenistic thinker wished to combine logic, ethics and metaphysics, with philosophy compared to a tree ; its roots are logic, the branches are metaphysics and its fruit is ethics.<sup>478</sup>

Alexandria was the most important centre for the study of the Greek legacy. Moreover in Syria and Iraq the Greek language was studied as late as the fourth century at Antioch (Antāqiya), Ḥarran, Edessa (Urfa), Qinnésrin (Kinnesrin), Nisibis (Nizip), Rāsaina (Ra'su'l-ayn) and Jundishapūr. In these centres theological books in particular were translated into the Syrian language such as St. Clement Alexandria's "*Theophany of Eusebius*" and Titus of Bostra's '*Discourses*'.<sup>479</sup>

Edessa (Urfa): The school of Edessa was established by the Iranians for the study of the Greek language in 363 A.D. At this school Aristotle's *Categories*, and *Analytic Priora* were studied. For the first time, Greek philosophical works were translated into Syriac. For a time the Nestorians<sup>480</sup> took over this school and used philosophy and logic to deduce proofs for their religious ideas.<sup>481</sup> Thus, in this theological school logic and philosophy were taught together with religious lessons.<sup>482</sup>

Nisibis (Nizip): After the closing of the philosophy school in Edessa by the Byzantine emperor Zeno in 489 A.D.<sup>483</sup> because of its Nestorian tendencies,<sup>484</sup>

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478 - Perelman, A Historical Introduction to Philosophical Thinking, p. 70-71.

479 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 2.

480 - The followers of the Nestorian or Assyrian church which is an appellation dating from the fifth century. They had their religious centre at Edessa known as Urfa in present day Turkey. (See The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 10, p. 369).

481 - Qadir, Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World, p. 33.

482 - Kumeyr, Islam Felsefesinin Kaynaklari (The Sources of Arab Philosophy), p. 158 (Turkish).

483 - Ibrahim, and Sagadeev, Classical Islamic Philosophy, p. 5.

Edessa's masters and students were invited to Nisibis by the Nestorian Bishop Bersuna. In Nisibis they established a new centre for philosophical and theological study under the leadership of Nersi. This school survived until the establishment of the school of Baghdad in the ninth century.<sup>485</sup>

Antioch: Another school of the Alexandrian type was established in Antioch in 270. In this school the Nestorians and Jacobites<sup>486</sup> gave up using the Greek language and started to use Syriac for prayer. For this reason they began to translate the ancient Greek legacy into the Syriac language.<sup>487</sup>

Ḥarran: In the seventh century there were two other important centres, at Ḥarran,<sup>488</sup> and Jundishapūr in Syria. The Ḥarranian people were Sabaeans and erroneously identified with *Ṣābi'ah* mentioned in the Qur'ān among the "People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*), those to whom Divine revelation was given. Actually these Sabaeans were pagans and their religion contained Hellenistic, Gnostic, and Hermetic influences.

The intellectual influence of the Sabaeans helped to disseminate the Greek legacy among the Muslims. Their contributions to the field of mathematics and astronomy were very significant. One of the Ḥarranians named Thābit b. Qurra (d. 901)<sup>489</sup>, his son Sinān (d. 943) and grandsons, Thābit and Ibrāhīm, played an important role in

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484 - Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 15.

485 - Kumeyr, *Islam Felsefesinin Kaynaklari* (The Sources of Arab Philosophy), p. 158 (Turkish).

486 - The Syrian National church which originated from the Monophysites of Antioch. Their names come from their leader, Jacob Baradeus, who organised the group during the reign of Justinian and Theodora. (See *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, William L. Reese, p. 262).

487 - Kumeyr, *Islam Felsefesinin Kaynaklari* (The Sources of Arab Philosophy), p. 158, 165 (Turkish).

488 - Ḥarran is between the river Tigris (Dicle) and the river Euphrates (Fūrāt) in northern Syria.

489 - A mathematician, physician and philosopher from Ḥarran. The 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Mu'tadid bi-'llah appointed him as one of his astronomers at Baghdad. The greater part of his life was spent in translating and expounding Greek mathematicians, in composing his own mathematical works, in philosophical studies and in the practice of medicine. He wrote in Syriac on the doctrine and worship of the Sabaeans, his co-religionists of Ḥarran.



the transmission of Greek thought into Arabic by their translations. At the same time they provided great court astrologers to the 'Abbāsids Court.<sup>490</sup>

**Jundishapūr:** The other Hellenistic school, Jundishapūr was established by the Sasanids sovereign Khusraw Anūshirwān I. (Chosrew) (521-579). In this institution in particular, philosophical and medical studies were quite powerful. Although the majority of teachers in this school were Nestorian Christians, Khusraw extended his toleration to Monophysites.<sup>491</sup> When the schools of philosophy were closed at Athens by order of the Emperor Justinian in 529, the last Neoplatonist philosophers took refuge in Iran because of sectarian conflicts.<sup>492</sup> Through this event the Hellenistic tradition spread in Asia, in particular in the Persian cultural milieu.<sup>493</sup> Since the Jundishapūr was a meeting place where Iranian, Indian, Babylonian and Greek cultures mixed together.

The Jundishapūr school was first established as a medical centre but in later years it became a university with a medical faculty and observatory and education complexes. For this reason most of the court physicians of the Caliphs came from Jundishapūr,<sup>494</sup> such as the family of Bakhtīshū' who had previously served Persian monarchs with their medical expertise.

**Translations of Hellenistic Texts:** Since Syria in particular was the meeting place of Greek philosophy and the eastern religions the first translation into Arabic was started there. Muslim thinkers were introduced to the Hellenistic tradition by an indirect way because they did not know the Syriac language. For this reason, most of the translators were among Nestorians and Monophysites Christians<sup>495</sup> very few

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490 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 3.

491 - Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 14.

492 - Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 15.

493 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, Classical Islamic Philosophy, p. 5.

494 - Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 14.

495 - The name given to those who hold the doctrine that Christ had but one composite nature and especially to those who maintained this position in the great controversies of the 5th and 6th century A.D.

were Sabaeans. Also, Muslims received the Greek heritage through both authentic and the apocryphal sources. By the time the Muslims conquered the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern world, the translations had already begun. However, these translations were limited to Aristotle's *Hermeneutica* and the *Analytica* and some other mystical books.<sup>496</sup>

In the early part of Islamic history, the official language of the state was Greek or Persian. At the time of Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (605-680),<sup>497</sup> Arabs had no experience of finance and accountancy; they used foreign financiers such as St. John of Damascus who was the finance minister of Mu'āwiya. This situation of non-Muslims acting as officials of the Caliph<sup>498</sup> was objectionable to many Muslims. For this reason, for the public records Arabic was used instead of Persian and Greek. Therefore, in the course of the time Arabic also became the language of science and culture all over the Muslim world.<sup>499</sup>

The Arabic translations began around the eighth century and continued for two hundred years. Most of the first translations were made by Arab Christians since they were very well versed both in Arabic and Greek.<sup>500</sup>

During the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd 786-809, Yaḥyā al-Barmakī (d. 805) encouraged the translation of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic. Even the school of Baghdad or, House of Wisdom (*Bait al-Ḥikma*), was built on the model of the school of Jundishapūr under the leadership of Yuḥanna Ibn Masāwayh (d.

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496 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 2.

497 - Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan, founder of the Umayyad dynasty of caliphs based in Syria; He had been a crypt-Muslim since 628, and made his Islam manifest in 630. His sister Umm Habiba was married to the Prophet. He functioned as a commander against the Byzantine, and in 646 Syria and al-Jazira were under his control. After the Battle of Şiffin in 656 Mu'awiya was recognised as caliph by the Syrians. 'Alī was murdered by a Khāridjī in 661, and Mu'awiya became caliph.

498 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 25.

499 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, Classical Islamic Philosophy, p. 6.

500 - The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edward Paul, vol. 4, p. 468.



857)<sup>501</sup>. By the order of al-Ma'mūn Yuhanna translated many Greek books into Arabic.<sup>502</sup>

However these first translations were mostly limited by the commands of Caliphs or viziers, rather than scholars scientifically oriented. In this period wisdom writings, including moral stories, anecdotes and other pretty stories, were popular.<sup>503</sup> Although most of these translations were made from Syriac versions, some of them came directly from the Greek originals into Arabic.<sup>504</sup>

The first translation seems to be made by Khālid b. Yazid. Some chemical, astrological and medical texts were translated. Some accounts claim that the Arabic translations began with a Jewish physician named Māsarjawayh (Māsarjīs). He translated the medical books of a Monophysites physician named Aron. Another account claims that Aristotle's *Categories*, *Hermeneutica*, and *Analytica Posteriora*, and Porphyry (d. c. 450)'s *Isagoge*, were translated for the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr b. al-Mahdī. At the time of Hārūn al Rashīd, 'Umar b. Farūkhān wrote a commentary on the *Quadripartitus* of Ptolemy (c.90-168).<sup>505</sup>

Before the works of Yaḥyā b. al-Biṭrīq, most of the translations were of the practical medical and astronomical texts. Yaḥyā mainly translated in particular philosophical books such as Plato's *Timaeus*, Aristotle's *De Anima*, *Analytica* and *Secret of Secrets (Sir al-Asrār)*.<sup>506</sup> Caliph al-Ma'mūn was a rationalist of the Mu'tazilī understanding and for this reason was interested in the translation of

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501 - Famous physician, contributed to the translation of Greek scientific works but was known particularly in his capacity as court physician and as a specialist on diet. He wrote a collection of medical aphorisms and a short of description of the seasons of the year. As late as the 15th century he was held in high esteem in the West.

502 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science In the Islamic World*, p. 33.

503 - Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 19.

504 - Radhkrishnan, *History of Philosophy East and West*, p. 125.

505 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 5-6.

506 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*, p. 35.

scientific texts at the centre "House of Wisdom" (*Bayt al-Ḥikma*), which contained a library, an observatory and a translation centre.

In this translation faculty, Syriac, Pahlavī, Greek and Sanskrit texts were translated into Arabic by translators under the leadership of Yuḥanna b. Māsawaih. His disciple, Ḥunayn b. Ishāq (808-873) was also known to have translated some books of Aristotle, Galen (129-c.200), Appollonius and Archimedes. At the same time, Qūṣṭā b. Lūqā translated many other philosophical, astronomical and medical works. Thābit b. Qurra, his two sons, two grandsons and his disciples translated many philosophical and astronomical books but today it is difficult to distinguish the authors of these translations.

Moreover, it is known that Yaḥyā b. 'Adī (d. 974) translated Aristotle's *Categories*, *Poetics*, *Metaphysics* and Plato's *Timaeus* and *Laws*. He also translated some books on logic such as *the Prolegomena* of Ammounius and an introduction of Porphyry's *Isagoge*. At the end of the ninth century A.D. all the major works of Aristotle had been translated. Although their quotations from Plato were taken from his *Apology*, *Crito*, the *Sophistes*, *Phaedrus*, the *Republic*, *Phaedo*, *Timaeus* and *the Laws*,<sup>507</sup> indeed Plato's only *Laws*, *Sophist*, *Timaeus* were translated completely. Therefore for the first time -since the days of Alexander the Great- the Arab Muslims again united Eastern wisdom, Western philosophy, Mediterranean and Indian, as well as Iranian cultures, under the umbrella of Islamic wisdom.<sup>508</sup>

### 3- Indian and Persian influences:

Muslim thinkers encountered both Western and Eastern cultures in the eighth century and were influenced in particular by their medical and political texts and institutions. For the first time some *ethico-didactic* works were translated from Pahlavī to Arabic.<sup>509</sup> The first scientific translation from Indian to Arabic was *The Siddhanta* of Brahmagupta, which was translated by Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-

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507 - Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 23.

508 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, *Classical Islamic Philosophy*, p. 5, 8.

509 - *Ibid.* p. 6.



Fazārī (d. 806). This book of astronomy further affected the progression of Muslims' astronomical studies. At the same time, by the order of vizier Yaḥyā al-Barmakī, some Indian works were translated into Arabic. According to the reports of Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 995)<sup>510</sup> there was a translated book *Religious Beliefs of the Indians* in al-Kindī's handwriting. Another translation from an Indian language was *On the Truth About the Beliefs of Indians* written by al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048)<sup>511</sup> .<sup>512</sup>

Also, some significant works were translated from various Persian languages into Arabic. One of the most important translators was a Persian convert from Zoroastrianism<sup>513</sup> called Ibn al-Muqaffa' (720-765) who translated Bidpai's ethical story book *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Besides this book, he also translated *History of Persian Kings (Khudai-Nāmeh)*, *The book of Mazda (Ayin-Nāmeh)* and *A Biography of Anūshirwān*. Some astronomy books were also translated from Persian to Arabic by Abū Sahl b. Nawbakhtī<sup>514</sup> .<sup>515</sup> On the other hand beside Indian astronomy books some other scientifically literature such as chemistry, botany pharmacology, zoology books were also translated.<sup>516</sup>

The Persian influence on Islamic philosophy consisted only of a few moral and aphoristic traditions. However, even without these textual influences there was an indirect affect of Iranian culture on Islamic writing. After 750 A.D. almost all the

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510 - Abu 'l-Faraj Muḥammad b. Abū Ya'qūb Ishāq, author of the well-known Kitāb al-Fihrist which was completed according to the author's own statement as an 'index'.

511 - One of the most original and profound scholars of medieval Islam. Of Iranian origin he was equally versed in the mathematics, astronomy, physiology and natural sciences and also distinguished himself as a geographer and historian chronologist and linguist and as an impartial observer of customs and creeds.

512 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 31, 32.

513 - One of the most ancient pre-Islamic religions in Iran. Its founder Zarathushtra who probably lived around the beginning of the first millennium B.C.

514 - A famous astronomer, converted to Islam, and participated with al-Manṣūr in the constructing of Baghdad.

515 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 33, 34.

516 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, Classical Islamic Philosophy, p. 6.

chief Muslim scholars of Islam were of Persian origin. For instance, the greatest grammarian, Sībawayh (d. 793), the greatest philosopher Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), the greatest physician, al-Rāzī (864-925), and the greatest theologian Ghazālī (1058-1111) were all Persian.

For the first generation of Muslim thinkers the Qur'ān and Sunna were the two main proofs, the measure of all Islamic practice and theoretical study. Philosophy was not excluded from this process. A number of external and internal reasons can be cited for the tendency of Muslim thinkers to learn Hellenistic philosophy and Eastern wisdom. Classical Islamic philosophy was established through a fusion of Greek philosophy and Eastern wisdom deriving mainly from the Persian and Indian cultures. Thus Muslims combined Eastern wisdom with Western philosophy through Islamic teaching.

## B- WISDOM IN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHICAL WRITING

Although it is difficult to draw the exact boundaries between the terms philosophy (*falsafa*) and wisdom (*ḥikma*) or theosophy, Muslim philosophers acquainted with Greek and Hellenistic philosophy frequently used the concept of *falsafa* rather than wisdom (*ḥikma*). However, it appears that they used to indicate such philosophy by the term “*Ḥikmat al-Yūnāniyya*” (Greek wisdom), to distinguish it from the Eastern concept of *ḥikma*, which referred to a kind of practical theosophical way of life.

### 1- Concept of wisdom in Islamic philosophy:

In Islamic philosophical writing the term wisdom (*ḥikma*) can be translated as ‘theosophy’<sup>517</sup> rather than philosophy or theology. Thus Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) replaced ‘philosophy’ with the term ‘wisdom’ (*ḥikma*) because of the limited sense of philosophy, and its tendency to stand against ‘religion’. Ibn Sīnā in his work *The Sources of Wisdom*, ‘*Uyūn al-Ḥikma*’ used the concept of wisdom (*ḥikma*) as a synonym of knowledge (*‘ilm*), and he mentioned that he preferred the richer meaning of wisdom (*ḥikma*), which is not restricted to the sense of ‘philosophy’.<sup>518</sup>

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517 - Direct and immediate experience on Divine World in theology and Sufism.

518 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 3, p. 378.



From the time of Suhrawardī, the term *ḥikma* has been increasingly used to designate the doctrine of the complete sage rather than Hellenistic philosophy.<sup>519</sup> With Suhrawardī Islamic philosophy gained entirely the character of wisdom, and tended to the Eastern practical wisdom and Islamic references, the Qur'ān and Sunna. As a result of this tendency, Suhrawardī was able to realise his project of restoring the ancient theosophy.

The Ṣafavid struggle in the sixteenth century, witnessed this ancient theosophy bond with the gnosis of Ibn al-'Arabī and the metaphysics of Sufism, as well as with the traditional Shī'i teaching. This wisdom teaching is best captured in the work of Mīr Dāmād, Mullā Ṣadrā,<sup>520</sup> Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, Ḥaydar Āmulī and Ibn Abū Jumhūr.<sup>521</sup>

Because of the above reasons, it is difficult to distinguish philosophy from wisdom and theosophical study in Islamic thought. In other words, by the time Muslim scholars assimilated Hellenistic philosophy into Islamic teachings and the Eastern way of life, thereby reaching a kind of wisdom understanding covering areas of human life, was represented in different ways in numerous Islamic writings.

## 2- Some subject matter of philosophical wisdom:

Through the study of ancient wisdom, it was shown that sages or wise people tended to find rules of nature and reasons behind human behaviour by observing the environment in which cultures existed. In this way ancient civilisations tried to find the general principles of daily life and foundations of ethical behaviour. Their observations were handed down, and provided important counsels for kings, officials, and scribes.<sup>522</sup>

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519 - Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 153.

520 - Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Shīrāzī, more commonly referred to as Molla Ṣadrā (d.1641), unanimously acclaimed as the greatest philosopher of modern times in Persia. Born in Shīrāz in 1572, he studied with Mīr Dāmād as well as Mīr Abū'l-Qāsim Fendereski (d. 1640). He especially wrote an important commentaries on Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq of Suhrawardī. In addition to this he wrote some treatises on Creation in Time (Ḥuduth), on Resurrection (al-Ḥashr), and on Free Will.

521 - Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 153, 154.

522 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Mircea Eliade, vol. 15, p. 395.

Since the nature of the concept of wisdom (*ḥikma*) includes many aspects of life, and there is no direct definition of wisdom in the Qur'ān, Muslim scholars tended to define this concept differently. However, in both ancient civilisations, which were examined in Chapter One, and in Islamic writing, generally wisdom was understood to imply a practical understanding, or a kind of fruit, rather than being a purely theoretical system of thinking.

The Arab Muslim writer, Ibn al-Qifṭī (1172-1248) applied the term wise (*ḥakīm*) to all the wise men, whose biographies he gives in his book entitled *The Way of Sages* (*Ta'rīkh al-Ḥukamā'*). The term wisdom, is also used both for philosophy and medicine. For instance Ghazālī (1058-1111) mentioned that the word 'wise man' (*ḥakīm*) had come to be used for the physician, the poet, and the astronomer.<sup>523</sup> Because according to Ghazālī, when knowledge rightly develops and becomes perfect, it can be called wisdom (*ḥikma*). Therefore, by *ḥikma*, one can distinguish the true from the false in judgements, the right from the wrong in beliefs, and the good from the evil in action.<sup>524</sup> From his interpretation of the Qur'anic verses concerning wisdom, Shāfi'ī (767-820) tended to find a more practical method, accepting that in the Qur'ān wisdom (*ḥikma*) refers to the usage of the word Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>525</sup>

On the other hand, since 'wisdom' (*ḥikma*) includes both justice and the perfection of the soul, in the history of Islamic thought, 'wisdom' (*ḥikma*) was accepted as a base (*aṣl*) or the science of fundamentals (*'ulūm al-aṣliyya*) on which other sciences can be built. Ibn Sīnā (980-1073) dealt with wisdom as the classification of the sciences as the place of the root and trunk. Therefore, the branches of wisdom include the whole field of the sciences.<sup>526</sup>

Therefore Muslims in general did not oppose natural philosophy, and philosophy which was established on the Divine premises. The former is also called *ḥikma*,

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523 - Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, vol. 1, chapter, 28 [1. 1. 3]

524 - Sardar, *Information and Muslim World*, p. 17.

525 - Shāfi'ī, *Risāla*, p. 75.

526 - *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, vol. 3, p. 549



which includes the rest of Islamic philosophical writing. For this reason the majority of Muslims named their studies after the concept of '*ḥikma*' rather than 'philosophy', as indicated by the following examples; Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*, Al-Bayhaqī, *Muntkhab Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma*, Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Al-Qiftī, *Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā'*, Al-Sijistānī, *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma*, 'Aṭā'illāh 'al-Judhāmī<sup>527</sup> *Kitāb al-Ḥikma* (The Book of Wisdom).

Philosophy was finally widely accepted in the Islamic world due to the popular idea concerning the origin of philosophy that stresses that philosophy has a Divine Prophetic background. However, philosophy in the Islamic world was not the reflection of Greek philosophy, but was that form of wisdom (*ḥikma*) in which Islamic principles and Eastern cultural elements, combined under the systematised explanation, through Hellenistic philosophy. In Islamic philosophical writing wisdom (*ḥikma*) can be seen as a kind of theosophical study, under the four main headings: Hermetic wisdom, wisdom as the base of Islamic mysticism, wisdom as a virtue, and practical as well as theoretical Wisdom.

a- Hermetic wisdom: By Hermetic, Muslim thinkers meant the followers of the Prophet Idrīs, or Ukhnukh. In particular, Muslim scholars accepted a kind of wisdom (*ḥikma*) which was originally derived from the ancient Egyptian culture, since Muslim philosophers believed that the founder of the arts and sciences, as well as of wisdom (*ḥikma*) and philosophy, was the Egyptian Prophet Idrīs (Enoch). In other words in the eyes of Muslim philosophers, wisdom originated from the divine Nature of God through the Prophets, just as another part of the universal divine revelation.

The Greeks were taken to have learnt much of what they knew from prophets and their followers, who were divinely inspired teachers. *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, (The

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527 - He was born in Egypt in the middle of the 13th century, as far as we can determine conjecturally, and he died there in the year 1309. Most of his life was spent in that land. His Kunya is that Tāj ad-Dīn Abū'l-Faḍl Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Judhāmī al-Mālikī al-Iskandarī. His principal works are The Book of Wisdom (*Kitāb al-Ḥikma*) and The Way of Success and the Lamp of Spirits (*Miftāḥ al-Falāḥ wa Miṣbāḥ al-Arwāḥ*). (See, *Kitāb al-Ḥikma*, translated by Victor Danner, Leiden, 1984).

Brethren of Purity)<sup>528</sup> for example, were among those scholars who identified philosophy with wisdom (*ḥikma*), and used philosophy almost synonymous with purely human wisdom.<sup>529</sup> Ibn Sīnā always kept in mind the ideal of combining the philosophy of the Greeks with wisdom, which was originally the possession of the ancient Prophets.<sup>530</sup>

To support such an argument Muslim philosophers referred to several verses from the Qur'ān, such as; "And (remember) Ishmael, and Idrīs (Enoch) and Dhu 'l Kifl, all were from among those who observe patience. And We admitted them to Our Mercy. Verily, they were of the righteous."<sup>531</sup>

On the first hand, there is the connection between philosophy and *ḥikma* made by Shī'i Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' on the lines of Hermes and Neopythagoreans. Before them, through the Harranians and Nuṣayris, the ideas of these two traditions entered into Shī'i Islam.<sup>532</sup> In this connection, Muslim philosophers claimed that Greek wisdom, which was represented by the sages, was also derived from the light of the Prophets. In opposition to the great number of early Muslim writers, Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' identified philosophy with wisdom (*ḥikma*). This was regarded as an evidence for the Muslim philosophers, who tended to approach Hellenistic philosophy as a whole. The other important representative of wisdom, Ibn Sīnā, always tended to combine Greek philosophy with *ḥikma* (wisdom), because *ḥikma* was originally the possession of the Hebrew prophets. According to Ibn Sīnā, the same wisdom was

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528 - A secret philosophical society in Iraq around 950. It's most popular representative was Zayd Ibn Rifā'ah. This group published more than fifty tracts in encyclopaedic form. It served as a forum for discussion and learning. Most of the members of this group were Ismā'īlīs. (See Chapter Seven, Ikhwān al-Ṣafā')

529 - Nasr, Islamic Cosmological Doctrine .p. 33

530 - Ibid., p. 184

531 - The Qur'ān, 21: 85-86.

532 - Nasr, Islamic Cosmological Doctrine, p. 15.



later revealed in its fullness in Islam. Because of this, in his writing, he always tried to conform his philosophical ideas to the Qur'anic revelation.<sup>533</sup>

b- Wisdom as the base of Islamic mysticism: There is common idea concerning Sufism that Muslim mystics (sufis) in particular combined religious ideas with eastern cultural elements and Hellenistic philosophy. Although in Sunni writings, pre-Islamic cultures and Greek philosophy did not play a central role, philosophy as a method through logical explanation was adapted to religious problems and theological conclusion, by those Sunni scholars such as Ghazālī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.<sup>534</sup> For example Ghazālī, started to philosophise using the sceptical method, but at the end of his deep philosophical discussions and wisdom meditations, he established a doctrine in which Sufism, Sharī'a, and philosophy, synthesised into one united explanation.

Some scholars claimed that the human mind has the capacity to deal with intellectual problems through the inspiration of Divine wisdom, without taking any unwanted aspect from Greek Philosophy. In this connection, the Modern Egyptian Muslim scholar Sayyid Quṭb claimed the following; "The human mind makes the foundation of Islamic perception just like philosophy, the main difference is that the human mind 'receives' it from its correct form without preconceived notions, whether based on its own rational understanding or the understanding of divine faith. Islam has a perception for the reality of God, his attributes and his relationship with creation and the world of the unseen (ghayb) and seen (shahāda). This is distinctive by the fact that it is complementary and harmonious. It is not different, separate cases, or isolated fact, but one unit..."<sup>535</sup> He added that, "We can not compare between Islamic perception of a material universe, or human existence, or life on earth, and any other perception which assumes the name and existence of a Divine Reality."<sup>536</sup>

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533 - Ibid., p. 184.

534 - Ibid., p. 15.

535 - Quṭub, Muqawwimāt al-Taṣawwur al-Islāmī. p, 42.

536 - Ibid., p, 44.

c- Wisdom as an ethical virtue: Other Muslim thinkers such as Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī combined philosophy and Islamic law (*Sharī'a*) as an ethical base. However, according to some scholars, Rāghib did not combine religion with philosophy, but wisdom. For instance, Bayhaqī stated that Rāghib was among the philosophers of Islam who combined Law (*Sharī'a*) with wisdom (*ḥikma*), and who was mainly concerned with the intellectual sciences. Madelung, however, points out that Rāghib had some sympathy with philosophy, which he combined with religious revelation, concerned with aesthetics formulations through suitable quotations from prose and poetry.<sup>537</sup>

According to Rāghib, intellect is viewed as the faculty which enables man to acquire knowledge and virtue; it distinguishes him from the rest of creation, entitling him/her to be the vicegerent of God on earth. The intellect was originally connected to revelation; and cannot be guided without the Divine revelation.<sup>538</sup>

Ghazālī began his discussion of virtues with wisdom, while Aristotle began with courage rather than wisdom. The reason seems to be that wisdom, more than courage, is essential for individual salvation.<sup>539</sup> On the same issue, Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī pointed out that 'absolute noble qualities' such as wisdom (*ḥikma*), generosity (*jūd*), knowledge (*'ilm*), forbearance (*ḥilm*), and pardon (*'afw*) can be used to describe God.<sup>540</sup>

According to Ghazālī, a healthy balance among the three faculties (the rational, the appetite, and the indignant) leads to the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, (*ḥikma*), temperance (*'iffa*), courage (*shajā'a*), and the equilibrium of these three, justice (*'adāla*).<sup>541</sup> Although according to Ghazālī, true wisdom is knowledge of God,

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537 - Yasien Mohammed, The Ethical Philosophy of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Journal of Islamic Studies 6:1 (1995) p. 51.

538 - Ibid., p. 68.

539 - Sharif, Ghazālī's Theory of Virtues, p. 40.

540 - Yasien Mohammed, The ethical Philosophy of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Journal of Islamic Studies, 6: 1 (1995) p. 68.

541 - Ibid., p. 57.



unlike the teachings of Aristotelian philosophers, it is not the highest virtue. While Aristotle considers it the highest virtue or perfect knowledge, Ghazālī stated that the love of God is higher than mere knowledge of Him. Yet, to reach this virtue, one needs to reach the knowledge of God as a step along the way.<sup>542</sup>

d- Practical and theoretical wisdom: In the history of thought, the wisdom (*ḥikma*) tradition has evolved in two different directions; one comes from daily experience, called human wisdom (*ḥikma*), the other is believed to be that revealed from the Divine source, such as the revelations received by prophets and saints. However, in Islamic thought daily experiential wisdom was combined with Divine wisdom, and called practical wisdom, or *ḥikma*, while philosophy was accepted as a speculative or theoretical wisdom, called '*falsafa*',<sup>543</sup>.

While Miskawayh (d. 1030)<sup>544</sup> described practical wisdom as an ethical attitude between two extreme ways, Ibn Sīnā claimed that wisdom as a virtue (*ḥikma al-faḍīliyya*), does not mean theoretical wisdom, but rather, practical wisdom pertaining to worldly actions and behaviour. He compared it to being on guard against the ingenious ways, whereby one can attain through it every benefit and avoid every harm.<sup>545</sup> Ghazālī listed the subdivisions of this practical wisdom into five virtues; discretion (*ḥusn al-tadbīr*), excellence of discernment (*jūdat al-dhihn*), penetration of idea (*thaqābat al-ra'y*), correctness of opinion (*ṣawāb al-ẓann*), and awareness of subtle actions and of the hidden evils of the soul (*al-tafajūdat al-dhihn*).<sup>546</sup>

According to Ghazālī, there are two kinds of wisdom corresponding to the two faculties of the soul, namely theoretical and practical wisdom. Theoretical wisdom is concerned with the knowledge of God, His attributes, angels, prophets and

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542 - Sharif, Ghazālī's Theory of Virtues, p. 41.

543 - In the following chapters this theoretical wisdom will research as Islamic philosophy.

544 - A physician, philologist and historian, he died in 1030. He found a philosophical system of ethics. In this system he combined philosophical materials and Islamic law.

545 - Sharif, Ghazālī's Theory of Virtues, p. 42.

546 - Ibid., pp. 92-94.

revelation. Ghazālī called this kind of knowledge 'true wisdom', because it represents the knowledge of God. Ghazālī also claimed that whoever knows all things but does not know God, does not deserve to be called wise; whoever knows God is wise, even if his knowledge is poor concerning formal sciences.<sup>547</sup>

### Conclusion:

In Islamic philosophy, in place of strict theological debate, Muslim philosophers discussed theosophy as a kind of Islamic thinking process. Even the term "*ḥikmat al-ilāhīya*" is identified frequently with theosophy rather than philosophy or theology. Specially in mystical tendencies, wisdom (*ḥikma*) is defined as an inner knowledge corresponding to mystical gnosis (*irfān*), and the heart's knowledge (*ma'rifa*). As a result of this understanding Islamic Philosophy always stressed more the wisdom element than philosophy as such. In the following chapter theoretical wisdom (*falsafa*) will be examined as the main body of Islamic philosophy.

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547 - Ibid., p. 40. 41.



## CHAPTER VII

### SYSTEMATIC THINKING IN ISLAMIC WORLD

#### Introduction:

During the Prophet's life time the revelation continued to answer the problems facing the community. The prophet himself applied these fresh revelations in the community. At the same time Muslims could ask him directly whatever questions they wanted. For Muslims living in distant places the prophet sent some of his companions to teach them Islam and demonstrate how to practice it. For these reasons this period is called "the century of happiness" (*'asr al-sa'āda*).

After the death of the Prophet in 632 the first generation of Muslim scholars believed that their way of life should revolve around the Qur'ān and the Sunna, and Islamic legal and moral sciences should be based on these two very fundamental sources of Islam.<sup>548</sup> Although there were some differences of opinion on some details, on the question of principles, Muslims were completely united.<sup>549</sup> The other reason for this unity seems to be the continuation of the consultation practice (*shūrā*) of the Prophet, whereby ideas were discussed freely and generally led to single conclusions under the umbrella of the Islamic state.

There appears to have been two reasons that caused Muslim thinkers' to be oriented towards systematic thinking. On one level Islam was confronted with new issues arising from ancient religions and cultures such as Hellenistic philosophy, Christianity, Paganism, Zoroastrianism and Brahmanism beliefs.<sup>550</sup> Since the new converts tried to harmonise their previous religion and cultural heritage with Islamic principles, they started to interpret the Qur'ān in the light of their ancestral beliefs.<sup>551</sup>

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548 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. xvi.

549 - Nadvi, Muslim Thought and Its Source, p. 10.

550 - Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 41.

551 - Nadvi, Muslim Thought and Its Source, p. 10-11.

Internally, three important questions arose: first, an explanation of God's overwhelming supremacy in the world and how God affects the responsibility of human agents; the second was the question of "free will", and the third, the nature of the Qur'ān (Was it created or not?).

The absence of a religious class in Islam left open questions of who to consider as believers (*mu'min*) and infidels (*kāfir*). Muslim theologians (*mutakalimūn*) became deeply involved in debates, attempting to make strong the basis of Islam through rational explanations.<sup>552</sup> To do so they developed a number of sciences, such as philology, commentary, theology, jurisprudence and grammar. Although these sciences were not the result of the Qur'ān and Sunna alone, the main principles and references were taken from these two fundamental sources.

When Islam expanded through Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia these traditionalists were confronted with circumstances which lead to the formation of the schools of theology and Law (*fiqh*).<sup>553</sup> However, until the beginning of the Umayyad period in 662 there was no theological element in these schools. Sociology of knowledge and history shows that almost all theological and sectarian ideas depend on political or social events, and in this respect Islamic thought is no different.<sup>554</sup>

#### A- ISLAMIC THEOLOGY (*KALĀM*):

##### Introduction:

In Islam the term '*kalām*' refers to the study of the Divine science. For this reason '*kalām*' was called by some writers "Islamic scholastic theology". Technically the science of theology ('*ilm al-kalām*) is a kind of meditation system in the service of religious beliefs ('*aqā'id*) that defends the contents of the faith against its opponents and to relieve Muslims from doubts. At the same time '*Ilm al-Kalām* is synonymous with the term of '*Ilm al-Tawhīd* (the science of Divine Unity) which is an interpretation of the Divine unity as the basis of the Muslim faith.

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552 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, Classical Islamic Philosophy, p. 12-13

553 - The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Edited by Cyril Glassé, p. 217.

554 - Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p. 2.



## 1- Definition:

The term 'kalām', originally a Qur'anic term, refers to the 'speech of God,' (*kalāmullāh*). Thus in the Qur'ān God said to Mūsā "My speaking to you (*bi-kalāmī*)"<sup>555</sup>. The technical usage of the term 'kalām' was started by Arabic translators of Hellenistic heritage. In these translations the term 'logos' (speech or dialectic) was translated as 'kalām'.<sup>556</sup>

At the same time the term 'kalām' was used in place of the terms 'reason' and 'argument'.<sup>557</sup> Also 'kalām' was sometimes viewed as synonyms with the ideas of theologians and philosophers,<sup>558</sup> such as "*Christian mutakallimūn*", "*the kalām of Aristotle*", "*the kalām of Empedocles*" or "*the kalām of philosophers*".

In his book *Iḥsā' al-'Ulūm*, Fārābī states that "*Ilm al-Kalām* is a science which enables a man to procure the victory of the dogmas and actions laid down by the legislator of the religion, and to refute all opinions contradicting them."<sup>559</sup> Since the above definition more closer to the meaning of theology it has been widely used with this understanding in mind. For instance, in Christianity it is understood as the systematic critical classification of the historical beliefs of the church.<sup>560</sup>

It is enough to discuss here two main systematic theological movements, Mu'tazila and Ash'ariyya, rather than researching all of the Muslim theology schools and their representatives.

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555 - The Qur'ān, 7: 144. "(God) said: "...O Mūsā I have chosen you above men by My Messages, and by My speaking (to you). So hold that which I have given you and be of the grateful."

556 - The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Gyriil Glassé, p. 216.

557 - Wolfson, The Philosophy of Kalām, p. 1.

558 - Shahrastāni, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, Mu'assasat al-Halabi wa-Shurakah, Cairo, 1968, vol. 1, p. 29; Quoted from "Classical Islamic Philosophy" by Ibrahim Taufic, and Arthur Sagadeev, p. 18.

559 - Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 3, p. 1141.

560 - Dictionary of Belief and Religion, Edited by Rosemary Goring, p. 526.

## 2- The rise of Islamic Theology:

After the battle of Şiffīn<sup>561</sup> in 657, the Muslim community divided into three main groups; Khāridjī, Shī'i and Sunni, and all would carry the seeds for more groups.<sup>562</sup> One of the groups among 'Alī's followers did not accept the method of arbitration between 'Alī and Ma'āwiya I and then separated from 'Alī and became the Khārijīs. The name, reflecting the historical actualities of the period means 'went out'. Later on some Muslims from Mu'āwiya's group and other groups joined the Khārijīs.<sup>563</sup>

These kinds of political events evoked some new theological problems. For the first time Muslim intellectuals began to consider the problem of the validity of the faith (*īmān*), the nature of the Qur'ān (created or non created), Divine attributes (*ṣifāt*) and destiny (*qadar*).<sup>564</sup> According to Shahristānī (1076-1153) the following problems brought about so many of the schools of thought in Islam. They are; the question of free will, the problem of attributes of God, and the relationship between beliefs and actions or the dispute between reason and actions.<sup>565</sup>

The Khārijīs believed that 'Alī was capable of making mistakes and he was wrong for not punishing the murderers of 'Uthmān<sup>566</sup> and accepting the method of arbitration. They even claimed that it was a duty for Muslims to kill 'Alī. In their view, whoever had committed a grave sin was destined for Hell fire. The Khārijīs' strict and intolerant thoughts elicited the opposition of both the Shī'i and Murji'a.

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561 - A battle between the followers of 'Alī and the people of Mu'āwiya at the side of the river of Euphrates in 'Iraq. The result was a protected arbitration but in 661 'Alī was assassinated and the way was open for Mu'awiyah to inaugurate Islam's first dynasty, Umayyad.

562 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 3, p. 1142.

563 - Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, P. 2-3.

564 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 3, p 1142.

565 - Nadvi, Muslim Thought and its Source, p.12, 13.

566 - Fourth caliph of Islam who at the same time established a commission of scholars who collected the revelations of God to produce the definitive version of the Qur'ān.



However 'Alī's group- because of their extreme partisanship, other groups called them 'the party (Shī'i), believed that 'Alī could make no mistake. Another objection to the Khārijīs came from the Murji'a. They believed that the question of what constituted a great sin must be left to the Divine Judgement.<sup>567</sup> Another Murji'a idea is that committing sins does not harm faith because faith and action were different.

One of the early theological doctrines, Jabriyya claimed that humans have no free will and everything just happens according to Divine destiny. Therefore humans cannot act against the Divine destiny. However, Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (c.700-765) opposed them by saying: the doctrine of Jabriyya converts God into an unjust Master.<sup>568</sup>

This earliest period of *kalām* witnessed first the problem of human free will, and God's justice and relationship to the world.<sup>569</sup> Ma'bad al-Juhānī (d.699) and Ghaylān of Damascus (d. before 743) upheld the idea of free will (*qadar*), claiming that all people were responsible for their faith and behaviour.<sup>570</sup> Some add to this Qadariyya list Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā', who was the founder of the Mu'tazila school. Another account says that Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (642-728), a respected authority for both Sunni and some other theological movements, also claimed the existence of free will.<sup>571</sup>

The Qadariyya idea conflicted sharply with the Umayyad regime, the Umayyad caliphs, in their view, failing to accept responsibilities for their own political decisions. For this reason both Ma'bad al-Juhānī (d. 699) and Ghaylān were executed on the orders of the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Mālik b. Marwān (685-705)

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567 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, Classical Islamic Philosophy, p. 12.

568 - Nadvi, Muslim Thought and Its Sources, p. 17.

569 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 3, p. 1142.

570 - Ibid., p. 1141.

571 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 44.

and Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Mālik (724-743) respectively.<sup>572</sup> From this controversy arose the two main theological schools, Mu’tazila and Ash’ariyya both of which raised and systematised Islamic theology as the first step of Islamic teaching and wisdom.

In addition to the above theological schools there is one other theology school called Māturīdīyya. One of the Ḥanafī theologians Abu Mansūr Māturīdī (c.873-c.944) was the founder of this doctrine which differed very little from the teaching of the Ash’ariyya. For this reason both Māturīdīyya and Ash’ariyya were recognised as Sunni schools of theology. Ash’ariyya later came to be considered the official school, and for this reason Māturīdīyya except for Samarqand and some other local places, has not become as popular as Ash’ariyya.<sup>573</sup>

Therefore the first systematic thinking of scholastic theology (*kalām*) arose as a means of buttressing Islamic beliefs by logical arguments and defending them against attack. In this way Muslim theologians could correct misunderstandings about, and preserve the original nature of, the teachings of Islam.<sup>574</sup> I will focus on the rationalism of the Mu’tazila and the orthodoxy of the Ash’ariyya in the following paragraphs.

### 3- Rationalism of Mu’tazila:

According to the accounts given by some ancient authorities such as al-Shahrastānī (1076-1153)<sup>575</sup> and Ibn Qutayba (727-779), the Mu’tazila movement started at Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s circle. While Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was giving a lecture in the great mosque of Baṣra, someone came and asked him if a Muslim who committed a

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572 - Ibid., p. 42, 43.

573 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, *Classical Islamic Philosophy*, p. 28.

574 - Nadvi, *Muslim Thought and Its Source*, p. 11.

575 - Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm, principal Muslim historian of religions in the middle ages. In his most famous work, a treatise on religions and sects, he passes in review all the philosophical and religious systems that he was able to study and classes them according to their degree of remoteness from Muslim orthodoxy. Shahrastānī wrote a book on theology called *Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī ‘ilm al-Kalām*. His remarkable book was *al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal*.



grave sin (*kabīra*) would still be a believer? Ḥasan al-Baṣrī replied that they would be called hypocrites<sup>576</sup>; then Wāṣil b. ‘Atā’ (699-748) commented that such a person was neither a believer nor an unbeliever.<sup>577</sup> Thus he put them in an intermediary place between disbelief and belief (*al manzilati bayn al manzilatayn*). Thereupon Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said that “he has seceded from us” (*i’tazalanā*).<sup>578</sup> After this event Wāṣil and ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd (d. 762 or 761) left Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s circle and were named ‘secedes’ (*mu’tazilī*). However, the Mu’tazilīs prefer to call themselves ‘the people of Unity and Justice’.<sup>579</sup>

The main goal of the Mu’tazilīs regarding this question was to unite the theological divisions and establish limitation for three basic concepts; *kufr*, *īmān* and *fisq*, which have been used in the Qur’ān frequently. Therefore, they balanced both semantic and historical discussions and took a middle way between the Khārijī and Murji’a position. According to the Khārijī viewpoint, a grave sinner (*murtakib al-kabīra*) is an infidel (*kāfir*) whilst the Murji’a consider that a grave sinner is still a Muslim. The Mu’tazilīs opinion placed them in an intermediate position which included belief and disbelief.<sup>580</sup>

It is important to remember that the Mu’tazila school did not start simply with Wāṣil’s or ‘Amr’s separation from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s circle, but has an historical background preceding even this seminal event. After the battle of Ṣiffīn, some Muslims did not join any other groups and followed a middle way, preferring to develop individualistic thinking. These thinkers and other independent authorities united on Mu’tazilī creeds. Another historical fact is that there was a considerable association between the founder of Jahmiyya school, Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d.749)<sup>581</sup> and

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576 - Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 209.

577 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 3.

578 - Ibid.

579 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*, p. 50.

580 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 46, 47.

581 - He was put to death in 745 or 746 since he denied all anthropomorphic attributes of God. He latter denied also eternity of Paradise and Hell. His followers called as “Jahmiyya”.

Wāsil b. 'Aṭā. Although the Mu'tazilīs upheld free will, they also agreed on some ideas such as the creation of the Qur'ān and the Divine unity.<sup>582</sup>

Mu'tazila, like Qadariyya, believed that man has freewill and liberty of action which may lead to a virtuous or sinful life, depending on the use of freedom.<sup>583</sup> Therefore Mu'tazila balanced all theological groups in a rationalistic framework and reached a systematic structure of Islamic thought.

At the beginning of the 'Abbāsīd period, Muslim thinkers were free to express their own ideas, unlike the prevalent situation in the time of the Umayyads. For this reason, instead of the discussions on the validity of the Imām and the great sin, Muslim theologians concerned themselves with the defence of Islam against the attacks of atheists (*zanādiqa*)<sup>584</sup>. The Mu'tazilī movement was the first school that gave a systematic interpretation of the Qur'ān and developed their own concepts.

The Mu'tazila movement developed predominantly in two main Islamic cities; Baṣra and Baghdad. Mu'ammār b. 'Abbād (d. c. 864)<sup>585</sup>, 'Abū al-Hudhail al-'Allāf (c. d. 840), al-Naẓẓām (d. c. 845)<sup>586</sup>, al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 868), al-Jubbā'ī (d.915)<sup>587</sup> and his

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582 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 45.

583 - Nadvi, Muslim Thought and its Source, p. 10, 43.

584 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 3, 1143.

585 - One of the Mu'tazilīs of Baṣra. He was a pupil of Hishām b. Amr al-Fuwaṭī (c. 833). Our knowledge of his views comes mainly from al-Ash'arī's Maqālāt. He emphasise that God's attributes in two sections: those of his essence and those of his relative activities.

586 - Brought up in Baṣra and he spent, the latter part of his life in Baghdad, where he died between 835-845. Mu'tazilī theologian of the school of Baṣra, poet, philologist and dialectician. His theology was dominated by zeal for the strictest monotheism and the Qur'ān, but his dogmatic extravagance brought down upon him the condemnation of almost the whole of the Sunnī Muslim community and even of the Mu'tazila. He claimed that God obtained good and had according to reasons. This idea caused him to rejected that the Prophet was charged for all people and to rejected the inimitable excellence of the Qur'ān.

587 - Jubbā'ī, Abū 'Alī, his ideas were refuted by Abū 'l Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, who had been his pupil. His son Abū Hashim 'Abd al-Salām (d. 933), was one of the very last Mu'tazilīs to exercise a direct influence on Sunnī thought.



son Abū Hashim (d. 933) were significant authorities of the school of Baṣra. Between the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries especially, the natural philosophy (the theory of atoms) and modes of existence were investigated at the school of Baṣra and original solutions were advanced. At the school of Baghdad there were some notable Mu'tazilīs such as Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir (d.825-840)<sup>588</sup>, his followers and Tuhmāma b. Ashras all agreed that reason ought to be exercised and given supremacy over faith. Moreover, they believed that God possessed two kinds of wills; essential and active.<sup>589</sup>

The key to the Mu'tazilīs thought was the concept of 'Divine unity' and 'justice', because their main task was to defend the unity of God against all enemies of Islam and to explain that God was not responsible for evil. They also believed that God had no semi-independent attributes, but only attributes belonging completely to him. In fact God had no need of any other qualities to create. As a result, some Mu'tazilīs began to examine God's attributes under two categories; those of his essence and those of his relative activities. Furthermore, the Mu'tazilīs believed that all revelations were reasonable. For example, a person was not responsible to know the laws of God if one had never heard of Islam or the prophets, but was responsible for believing in God.<sup>590</sup>

At the time of Yazid Ibn Walīd the school of Mu'tazila was enjoyed public support and became more famous than any other theological school. At the same time, for the first time the Mu'tazilīs became officers of the court. The second 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Manṣūr and 'Amr b. 'Ubayd were friends since their childhood. For this

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588 - Abū Sahl al-Hilālī was born in Baghdad from where he went to Baṣra where he met other Bishr b. Sā'id and Abū 'Uthmān al-Za'farānī, both companions of Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' who initiated him in the principles of the school. His other important master was Mu'ammār b. 'Abbād al-Sulamī. Only a few fragment of his writings on the Mu'tazilīs principles have come down to us. He says, we are responsible for acts initiated by ourselves either directly or "engendered" by our direct acts in measure as we are aware of all their consequences. He probably died between 825-840.

589 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 3, p. 61, and Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 64, 65.

590 - Tritton, Muslim Theology, p. 80.

reason, al-Mansūr took away all barriers to help the development of the Mu'tazila. Wāsil b. Āṭā' charged some of his companions in various centres to propagate Mu'tazilite thought. In addition some philosophical and scientific books which were translated by order of al-Mansūr, from Syrian, Persian and Greek, raised the importance of the Mu'tazila. Al-Mansūr for example, allowed freedom for all kinds of discussions even if they contained criticism of Islamic interpretation. At that time two great Mu'tazilīs, Hudhail al-'Allāf (c. d. 840) and Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām acted as al-Ma'mūn's own teachers and played an important role in defending Islam in this climate of intellectual freedom.<sup>591</sup>

The other important subject of Muslim theology was the relationship between God's essence and attributes. Theologians outside of the Mu'tazila school accepted that although the attributes of God depend on essence they are eternal. Essence is always the same, attributes are sometimes hidden and sometimes manifest. Essence is unity and attributes are diversity.<sup>592</sup> On the other hand, Hudhail al-'Allāf was one of the first allowed to use philosophy in theological doctrines, and he tried to find out the hidden meanings of some verses of the Qur'ān. For example, he believed that God's beholding on the last day was only allegorical because God's attributes were eternal and we could see Him neither in this world or the next. He claimed that revelation was not absolutely essential for faith because humans are able to know God without revelation, human knowledge coming from God both through revelation and Nature.<sup>593</sup>

A disciple of al-'Allāf called al-Nazzām, believed that God's omnipotence was limited by his nature and he does not need any attribute because his will is his agency. Again al-Nazzām, like his master al-'Allāf, claimed that God obtained good and bad according to reasons. Because of this he rejected the idea that the prophet was charged for all people and to reject the inimitable excellence of the Qur'ān. Like other Mu'tazilīs, al-Nazzām's ideas deviated from the orthodox point

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591 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 4, 5.

592 - Khan, The Philosophy of Islam, p. 9.

593 - Boer, The History of Philosophy, p. 49.



of view. For this reason Muslims could not tolerate them and the Mu'tazilīs' interpretations did not gain general acceptance.<sup>594</sup>

According to the great Mu'tazila authority Abū 'l-Husain al-Khayyāṭ (d. 902)<sup>595</sup>, the Mu'tazila had five basic principles (*uṣūl*) which underlay their thinking.<sup>596</sup>

-The Divine unity (*tawḥīd*): God is the creator of all existence. However, the Mu'tazila differentiated attributes of essence (*ṣifat al-dhāt*) and attributes of action (*ṣifat al-af'āl*). Thus the Qur'ān is also created as the word of God.

-The Divine justice (*'adh*): God can will only the good and he is always obliged to do good by his own will. Only things contain both good and bad. Human beings are the creators of their own acts by free will and reason. If man's actions were absolutely determined by God then, the responsibility of man would be absurd.

-The promise of reward and the threat of punishment (*al-wa'd wa 'l-wa'id*): God's absolute justice means that he cannot act against his own nature. Thus God can not give any reward to a sinner, nor can he punish a pious person.

-The state between states (*al-manzila bayān 'l-manzilatayn*): According to the Mu'tazilīs there is another position between believer and unbeliever. This is the position of *fāsiq*, a person who believes yet still commits sin.

-To order the doing of right action and prohibiting the doing of wrong (*al-amr bi-'l-ma'rūf wa 'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*): Actually this task has been practised by early Muslims, but later it lost relevance. The suggestion of what is good is a task

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594 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in Islamic World*, p. 52, 53.

595 - Abū 'l-Husayn 'Abd al-Rāhīm b. Muḥammad b. 'Uthman. He was the one of representatives of Baghdad Mu'tazila School at his time. He studied especially the problems like the relationship between God's essence and his attributes, the status of the believer and the nature of the Qur'ān, to the Question of the God's relation to the world of the creation and annihilation. He organised Mu'tazila ideas as the five basic principles (*uṣūl*): The Divine Unity, Divine Justice, the promise of reward and punishment. The state between states (another position between believer and unbeliever), to order the doing of right and prohibit the doing of wrong.

596 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 6.

for every Muslim. For this reason the Mu'tazilites again noticed the importance of this function.<sup>597</sup>

On the other hand the Mu'tazilīs did not try to understand the spiritual reality and denied many principles of orthodox faith such as the possibility of the beatific vision of God, the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān,<sup>598</sup> that actions will be weighed in a balance (*mīzān*), there are angels who record all doings of a person, there is a bridge (*ṣirāṭ*) in heaven, the covenant (*mīthāq*) between the individual's soul and God. At the same time they accepted the miracles of the Prophets and saints as genuine events, such as the ascending of prophets to heaven and that prayers can be of use.<sup>599</sup>

Another important point of criticism with regard to the Mu'tazila was the assimilation of a large number of Greek ideas and methods to Islamic thought. "According to al-Shahrastānī the early theological discussions on the "fundamentals of belief" (*'uṣūl*) during the later part of the seventh century were vitiated by dialectical elements derived from the books of the philosophers from Greek, Persian and Indian".<sup>600</sup> However this account is called into question by the apparent fact that Greek philosophy did not affect the rationalism of the Mu'tazila, its development being almost completed at the time of the translation period of Greek texts.<sup>601</sup>

Although the Mu'tazila were not a political movement, they received strong support under the patronage of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs. For this reason some of the orthodox movements attacked both the Mu'tazilīs' strong rationalism and the 'Abbāsīd court

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597 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, *Classical Islamic Philosophy*, p. 23, 24; and *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, vol. 3, p. 1143, 1144.

598 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 7.

599 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*, p. 53.

600 - Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, London 1892, p.17; Quoted from Majid Fakhry's, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 43.

601 - Nadvi, *Muslim Thought and Its Source*, p. 37.



together because during the 'Abbāsīd period, the Mu'tazila ideas were used against all the enemies of the 'Abbāsīd regime.

#### 4- Orthodoxy of Ash'ariyya:

After the death of al-Ma'mūn in 833 the Mu'tazila lost its relevance. The decline was assisted by the combative attitude of the jurist Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 855)<sup>602</sup> and the struggle of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mutawakkil. At the same time the Islamic world witnessed orthodox Muslim thinkers protesting strongly about the rationalist Mu'tazilī theology.<sup>603</sup> Ash'ariyya defended orthodox Islam against the Mu'tazilites' strict rationalism.

Thus, orthodox theologians arose against the unlimited rationalism of the Mu'tazila in various centre of the Islamic world. In Spain, there was Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064)<sup>604</sup>, in Egypt al-Thawī, in Samarqand Māturīdī (c. 873-c. 944) and in Iraq Ash'arī. From this milieu, Ash'ariyya became the official school from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>605</sup> In this sense Ash'ariyya was a reactionary movement against the Mu'tazila. However, the Ash'ariyya used the Mu'tazila's logic, philosophy and science of reasoning against them.<sup>606</sup>

There were two main reasons for the popularity of the Ash'ariyya school: Firstly, they defended the orthodox creed using a systematic method which was borrowed from the Mu'tazilī tendency. Secondly, the Ash'ariyya doctrine was needed by the Saljuqs government of the eleventh century to defend the orthodox doctrine of

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602 - Famous theologian, jurist, transmitter of traditions and founder of the Ḥanbalī school of law. His most celebrated work is a collection of traditions, known as Musnad.

603 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 203.

604 - 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Sa'īd b. Ḥazm al-Zāhirī, Abū Muḥammad, Andalusian poet, historian, jurist, philosopher and theologian. Born at Córdoba, he was one of the greatest thinkers of Arab Muslim civilisation. Also he can be studied as a psychologist and moralist. He is the most outstanding representative of the Zāhirī school. Amongst his books are: al-Fiṣal fī al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, al-Muḥallā, al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām.

605 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol.; 3, p. 1144.

606 - Nadvi, Muslim Thought and Its Source, p. 47, 52.

Sunni Islam against the attacks of the Shī'i Fātimids. For this reason Sultan Alparslan and Niẓām al-Mulk facilitated Ash'arīs' expansion all over the Muslim world. As a result of this support the majority of the Sunnis accepted Ash'ariyya theology as an official theological sect.<sup>607</sup>

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (873-935), the founder of the Ash'ariyya school was a descendant of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, a companion of the prophet.<sup>608</sup> Some accounts mentioned that the prophet appeared to al-Ash'arī in his dream<sup>609</sup> saying "I did not tell you to deal with theology but to defend the traditional beliefs, for they are the truth."<sup>610</sup> However, it has also been claimed that Ash'arī abandoned the Mu'tazilīs, following a debate with his teacher, al-Jubbā'ī, about God's justice. The story is recounted how one day al-Ash'arī asked his Master al-Jubbā'ī: "What will be the fate in the after-life of three people: a believer, an unbeliever and a child?" Al-Jubbā'ī replied that the believer was in Heaven, the unbeliever was in Hell, and the child was in a middle position. Ash'arī asked: "If the unbeliever asks God why He gave him a long life to be a sinner destined for Hell, when He already knew his future why did He not kill him in his childhood like the other children". Al-Jubbā'ī could not answer this question.<sup>611</sup> After this event, al-Ash'arī repented and started to struggle against the Mu'tazila.<sup>612</sup>

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607 - Ibid., p. 60.

608 - His full name is Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī. He was originally a former Mu'tazilī and studied with Mu'tazilīs until the age of forty. Then in 915 he moved to Baghdad and associated for a while with the disciples of Ibn Ḥanbal, after which he established his own theological system which his followers termed Ash'ariyya after its founder. He wrote three notable books: Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn, 'al-Luma', and al-Ibāna. In his major work Dissertation (Maqālāt), he was particularly concerned with the defence of the idea of God's omnipotence and in the reaffirmation of the orthodox religious authorities traditional interpretation of Islam.

609 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 203, 204.

610 - Tritton, Muslim Theology, p. 166.

611 - Tritton, Muslim Theology, p. 166.

612 - Qadir, Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World, p. 60, 61 .



Al-Ash'arī and other thinkers of Ash'ariyya fought on two fronts, against the absolute rationalism of the Mu'tazila and the conservatism of the orthodox traditionalists who refused the systemisation of Islamic belief by usage of reason.<sup>613</sup> Therefore, while the Mu'tazila believed in the supremacy of reason over faith, the Ash'ariyya used reason to organise all religious statements because their main goal was to establish the supremacy of revelation over reason. The Ash'ariyya thus managed to unify both the orthodox faith and the logical thinking method of the Mu'tazila. As a result of this struggle after some time, a number of traditionalist groups, including the Hanbalīs and Zāhirīs, joined the Ash'arīs and accepted most of their teaching as a theological system.<sup>614</sup>

The Ash'ariyya generally accepted the middle way between two opposing ideas. For instance, on the subject of free will, whilst the Jabriyya believed in predestination, the Mu'tazila groups admitted absolute freedom and believed that humanity created his/her own actions, the Ash'ariyya claimed that God created humanity with the consciousness of making free choices while accepting humanity's choices must be due to the will of God.<sup>615</sup> Thus, whilst God knows the events that will happen due to His supreme knowledge, people are still responsible for their actions. The Ash'ariyya on the other hand believed that God will not act against reason, but He can if He wills.<sup>616</sup>

On the question of the attributes of God, the Ash'ariyya again adopted the middle way and maintained that the attributes of God differed from his essence. They did not accept the Şifātīs' ideas, who believed that the Qur'anic statements pertaining to God's face, hands and throne are literal attributes of God. Therefore Ash'arī founded his school on the basis of compromise, between literalism and reasoned interpretation, and rationalism.<sup>617</sup>

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613 - Ibid., p. 62.

614 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, *Classical Islamic Philosophy*, p. 30.

615 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*, p. 63.

616 - Nadvi, *Muslim Thought and Its Source*, p. 48.

617 - Ibid., p. 58.

The two major issues of contention between the Mu'tazilīs and the Ash'ariyya were the eternity of the Qur'ān, and the importance of revelation. Furthermore, in opposition to the Mu'tazila, the Ash'ariyya held the view that the Qur'ān as the speech of God are not created but the letters and sound of the Qur'ān are. However, the Ḥanbalīs insist that any part of the Qur'ān, even its letters and sound, was not created.

At the same time, the Ash'ariyya did not agree with the Mu'tazilīs' assertion that the Qur'anic statements concerning God's attributes have only allegorical meanings. The Ash'ariyya believed that these descriptions must be interpreted as they are and Muslims should not ask 'how?'.<sup>618</sup>

Concerning the idea of the 'beatific vision', the Mu'tazilīs suggested that, if we were able to see God, He would need some definite time and space, but as God can be bounded neither by space or time, He cannot be seen in this world or in the Hereafter. In contrast to this, the Ash'ariyya believed that God can enable humans to see Him if He so wishes, as nothing is impossible for Him.

Many famous authorities came to serve the Ash'arite theology, such as al-Bāqillānī (d.1013)<sup>619</sup>, Juwaynī (d. 1085-6)<sup>620</sup> and Ghazālī. It was al-Bāqillānī who tried to establish a philosophical foundation for the Ash'ariyya and, by his impact, Ash'arī theologians came to accept the theory of atoms that God was the only cause, and so if God wanted to create or destroy something, He need only send or cut off the

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618 - The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Cyril Glassé, p. 52.

619 - Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī was an Islamic judge who was born in Baṣra in 950, he became one of the foremost figures in Islamic scholastic theology. Because of his strong logical arguing method, the caliph al-Dawla sent him an envoy to the Byzantine court in Constantinople (al-Qusṭanṭīniyya), and he debated with Christian scholars in the presence of their king. He lived most of his life in Baghdad, where he authored number of works on tenets of Islamic belief. He is said to have been a major factor in the systematising and popularising of Ash'ariyya.

620 - Theologian and jurist from Juwayn in Nishabūrī country, Iran. He owes his honorary name "Imām of the Holy Cities" (Imām al-Ḥaramayn) to the fact that he taught at Mecca and at Madina.



mode of its existence.<sup>621</sup> Bāqillānī however, denied that the universe was governed by the law of causation. It is no longer acceptable for causality that, if A produces B, then B must always be dependent upon A, as in reality everything depends upon the order of God.

Another considerable service was given to Ash'ariyya theology by Ghazālī. He combined philosophy and Ash'ariyya theology allowing the Saljuq empire to build a new civilisation defending Sunni theology against the Shī'ī Fāṭimid movement. The vizier of the Saljuqs, Nizām al-Mulk began to attack the Fāṭimids, using the ideas of Sunni orthodoxy. To do so Nizām al-Mulk began setting up theological Academies of Nizāmīya, in which Shāfi'ī *fiqh* and Ash'arī theology were taught. These academies were called Schools of Nizāmīya and it was in one of these schools, the Nizāmīya of Nishapūr, that the famous Ash'arī theologian al-Juwaynī and his disciple Ghazālī served Sunni creeds against both Mu'tazila and Shī'a.<sup>622</sup>

Although Ash'ariyya was a highly ordered and systematic theological movement, its weakness lay in the fact that it had borrowed most of its concepts from the teachings of the Mu'tazila. Nevertheless, they succeeded to find a way between some extremes tendencies and balanced many ideas which had divided the Muslim community in terms of theology and politics. The Ash'ariyya made great effort to protect the essence of Islam against the rationalism of the Mu'tazila and non-principled traditionalists movement. The result of this effort is plain today, their ideas firmly established as the orthodox Islamic creed.

## 5- Comparison between Mu'tazila and Ash'ariyya:

There are many differences between the two schools since the Ash'ariyya were a reactionary movement against the Mu'tazila. However, it is possible to compare the major ideas of both.

a- According to the Mu'tazila the essence and attributes of God are two different things, while the Ash'ariyya claimed that they are neither the same nor otherwise.

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621 - Tritton, Muslim Theology, p. 179.

622 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 218.

b- The Mu'tazilīs believe that human actions are free, humans being responsible for their actions. The Ash'arīs claimed that man has no free will and no liberty of action but does have free intention.

c- The Ash'arīs asserted that only religion that could reveal how mankind can win the pleasure of the Deity. However the Mu'tazilīs claimed that God would not impose on man a task beyond his power to perform it.

d- The Mu'tazilīs accepted that all actions of God must necessarily be bound by aims, whereas the Ash'arīs believed that no such compulsion could be imposed on the Deity.

e- The Mu'tazila hold that it is obligatory on God to reward the virtuous and punish the vicious, whereas the Ash'arīs hold that reward and punishment are entirely depends on God's will.<sup>623</sup>

Consequently, the main differences between the two schools was that, while the Mu'tazila defended human rights in religion, the Ash'ariyya defended God's right against misinterpretation. In one sense we can claim that the Muslim theology schools are looking at the same reality from different angles.

### Conclusion:

While the starting point of philosophy in Islam was the translations of Hellenistic philosophy, *kalām* as a pure Muslim wisdom arose totally within the Islamic body and was supported through Islamic references to the Qur'ān and Sunna. Therefore we can claim that Islamic theology (*kalām*) was the first systematic reasoning in Islamic history after the Prophet. However, the reliance on reason for the deciding matters brought the *kalām* closer to philosophy and further away from non-systematic traditionalism.

Therefore *kalām* represented an intermediate course between Islamic traditionalism and philosophy as a religious interpretation through reason and logic. Thus *kalām* can be seen as the first step of Islamic wisdom, since the starting point of wisdom in

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623 - Nadvi, Muslim Thought and Its Source, p. 65-75.



Islam and also in Christianity requires a strong belief in God and His transcendental power.

These first systematic theological studies were the natural result of the Qur'anic invitation to free inquiry. While some interpretations by Muslim theologians, were far from the view of orthodox Muslims, they left an influential heritage of rationalistic thought on which Islamic teaching could be understood better and Islamic faith can be defined, thus providing the foundation of Islamic wisdom.

## B- NATURALIST PHILOSOPHY OF *DAHRIYYA*

### Introduction:

The Mu'tazilīs were the first to attach importance to the use of rationalist methodology in religious discourse. However, apart from a few notable thinkers such as al-Nazzām (d. c. 845) who had some naturalistic tendencies, they were not influenced deeply by Greek philosophical rationalism.<sup>624</sup> Even the first Arab philosopher al-Kindī (c. 801-873)<sup>625</sup> was not influenced by Greek philosophical rationalism and was at the service of Islamic beliefs without any doubt concerning Islamic dogmas and orthodoxy. However, as more philosophical works were translated, Muslim theologians, in order to refute philosophical ideas, began to study philosophy seriously. In this period *'Ilm al-Kalām* gradually gained its philosophical character and became almost indistinguishable from philosophy.<sup>626</sup>

The combined impact of the Mu'tazilīs' methods of free inquiry, al-Kindī's systematic thinking and the intensive translations of Greek philosophy eventually raised doubts about the classical Islamic interpretation of the orthodox creeds. For instance, according to al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048), al-Kindī's disciple al-Sarakhsī (d.

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624 - Ibid., p. 26.

625 - Al-Kindī and the other Aristotelian philosophers, included Fārūbī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, have been examined under the title of Peripatetic (Meshshā'ī) Philosophy as the Chapter Seven.

626 - Ramadan Efendi, *Sharh 'ala Sharh al-'Aqā'id*, p. 22.

1090)<sup>627</sup>, who was very close to the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Mu’tadīd, attacked the prophets by calling them ‘charlatans’, and for this reason he was executed by order of the caliph. In this intellectual atmosphere naturalism (*dahriyya*) would rise and try to challenge some Islamic dogmas and sources.<sup>628</sup>

Literally ‘*dahr*’ means “unlimited time”, “a period of time” or “the transmission of time”. For this reason Dahriyya was also called *azaliyya* (unlimited time) by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’.<sup>629</sup> In the pre-Islamic Arab poetry the term ‘*dahr*’ was generally used to indicate ‘destiny’. The pre-Islamic Arab Dahrīs denied the creation of the world by One God as well as the future life (*ākhirā*). The Qur’ān condemns this view strongly: “And they say, ‘there is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except *al-dahr* (time). And they have no knowledge of it, they only have conjecture. And when our clear verses are recited to them their argument is no other than that they say: “Bring back our (dead) fathers, if you are truthful !”<sup>630</sup>

In Islamic literature the term ‘*dahr*’ denotes simply matter’ (*madda*), however the oldest definition of ‘*dahr*’ given by al-Jāhīz, the sense of atheism and naturalism combined with hedonistic teaching.<sup>631</sup> Some Dahrīs believed in One God but connected the creation of the world to the falling and striking of atoms. Because of this fatalistic tendency some scholars substituted the term naturalism (*ṭabī’yūn*) The Dahriyya also claimed that the world and its events are eternal because if the world was created in time it would assume the existence of an empty time which would be absurd.<sup>632</sup>

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627 - Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Sahl, Abū Bakr, Shams al-A’imma (d. 1090) He was a judge, a great Ḥanafī scholar, a mujtahid, from Sarakhs in Khurasan. Some of his books are: al-Mabsūṭ, Uṣūl al-Sarakhsī, and Sharḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Kabīr li al-Imām Aḥmad.

628 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 95, 96.

629 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 2, p. 95, 770.

630 - Qur’ān, 45: 24-25.

631 - Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, Edited by H. A. R. Gibb, and J. H. Kramers, p. 68.

632 - Qadir, Philosophy and Science in The Islamic World. p. 29, 30.



Ghazālī classified philosophers in general into three categories; *Dahriyya* (Atheist, Materialist), *ṭabī'yūn* (Deist, Naturalist), *'Ilāhī'yūn* (Metaphysicians such as the followers of Aristotle and Plato). Heretical (*mulḥid*)<sup>633</sup> ideas were classified into five groups by the famous heresiographer Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064):

1. Nihilistic thinkers denied the possibility of Divine laws and knowledge. According to them nobody can say that something is true or false.
2. Naturalist (*Ṭābī'yūn*) and Dahriyya did not believe that the world was created by a Divine Being.
3. Some philosophers believed in One God but believed that God created from the 'First Matter', rather than from nothing. This is in line with Aristotle's belief that the 'First Matter' is co-eternal like God.
4. Some other thinkers ascribed a partner to God or believed in two Gods such as the Manichaeans<sup>634</sup>.
5. The last group are those who believed in God and the creation of this world by Him but denied prophecy.<sup>635</sup>

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633 - Derived from the Arabic source *ilhād* which means deviation. *Mulḥid*, one who is a complete disbeliever. Therefore he does not believe in God and The Day of Judgment.

634 - Manichaeism a religious sect founded by Manes or Mani (c. 216-277). Some tradition says that he received his first revelation as a boy in c. 228 from a spirit he describes as 'the Twin'. This twin appears to him again in 240, urging him to preach what he had learnt. First Mani preached his faith to his immediate family, and then set out on a journey to the north-western part of India where he apparently made many converts. He returned to Iran in the reign of King Shahbuhrr I (241-272). Here he became a member of the public court, then wrote a compendium of his teaching for the King. Thus he was allowed to preach in Persian. After the death of Shahbuhrr, Manichaeism was felt to be a serious threat to Zoroastrianism in Iran. His teaching was based on a primeval conflict between the realm of light and darkness, in which the material world represents an invasion of the realm of light by the powers of darkness. (See, Dictionary of Belief and Religion, Edited by Rosemary Goring, p. 519).

635 - Kutluer, "Islam Heresiografi Tarihinden: Ibnu'r Ravendi'nin Bir Mulhid ve Deliri Olarak Portresi", *Bilgi ve Hikmet*, (Turkish Monthly Journal), 1995, vol. 9, p. 130-153. 1995.

According to Shahrastānī (1076-1153), the pre-Islamic Dahriyya denied both creation and the last day (āk̄hira) because they believed that nature gives and renders everything. Since the Dahrīs were sensualist and empiricist they were interested only in what they provided by sense-perception. They denied the ground of those who ascribed to metaphysics.<sup>636</sup> Ibn-al-Rāwandī and al-Rāzī are representative of the naturalist and heretical (*mulhid*) elements contained in the Dahriyya ideas.

1- Ibn al-Rāwandī :

But for a few important exceptions in the Mu'tazila, Shī'i and Sunni sources, there is a consensus about Rāwandī's (c.850-c.923) 'heretical' ideas and aberrations. However, if some of his fragments are interpreted from different points of view and if a sympathetic approach is taken, one can construct more than one portrait of Rāwandī.

**Life:** Ibn al-Rāwandī, whose full name was Abū 'l-Ḥusain Aḥmad b. Ishāq Ibn al-Rāwandī, was contrary to the widely held assumption, not from Rāvend in Iṣfahān, but was born in the village of Rivend in Merveruz near Herat.<sup>637</sup> It is not entirely clear when he was born and died the main sources giving contradictory dates for his chronology. For instance, about his date of death al-Mas'ūdī (c.896-c.956) gives 860, Ibn Kathīr<sup>638</sup> 910, Kātib Çelebi<sup>639</sup> 913/14. It is believed that al-Rāwandī was educated in Khorasān and in his early years went to Baghdad met with the Mu'tazilī thinkers, from whom he was influenced. Later he opposed the Mu'tazila and then embraced the Shī'i faith.

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636 - Kaya, Türk-Islam Felsefesi Ders Notlari, (Lecturer notes on Turkish- Islamic Philosophy), Istanbul, 1984.

637 - Fakhry, A History of Philosophy, p. 96.

638 - 'Imad al-Dīn, Syrian historian and traditionalist. His history of Islam in 14 volumes is one of the principal historical works of the Mamluk period. He also wrote a enormous compilation of traditions, and was interested in jurisprudence.

639 - Haji Khalifa, historian, bibliographer, Kātib Çelebi was one of the most conspicuous and productive Ottoman scholars. He wrote some 22 works.



Much of the authentic ideas of Ibn al Rāwandī can be found in his book “*Kitāb al-Faḍīhat al-Mu‘tazila*” which was protected by al-Khayyāt. In his book “*Faḍīlat al-Mu‘tazila*”, al-Jāhiz attacked the Shī‘a and presented the Mu‘tazilīs’ ideas as representative of the Islamic creed. Ibn al-Rāwandī, in his book, refuted these ideas and defended the orthodox Shī‘a against Mu‘tazila. According to Ibn al-Rāwandī, at the beginning the Mu‘tazilīs were in consensus with Shī‘a against orthodox Muslims. He stated that although the Shī‘a still carried on the same ideas, the Mu‘tazilīs changed their attitude. According to Ibn al-Rāwandī the attack of Jāhiz against the Shī‘a was pure opportunism. Maybe for this reason -with the Mu‘tazilī in the ascendancy- al-Rāwandī was categorised so negatively. Another important thing is that Ibn al-Rāwandī was a heresiographer and he collected many ideas which were non Islamic and pre-Islamic. For this reason both the Mu‘tazilī and the caliph attacked him forcing him to escape from Baghdad. After this event nothing is known about his life.<sup>640</sup>

Khayyāt (d. 931) in his book *Kitāb al-Intiṣār* says that Rāwandī was first a Mu‘tazilī, later becoming a Shī‘i after which he took on heretical ideas. Ibn al-Nadīm gives a virtually identical account. He explained that first of all Ibn al-Rāwandī was a moral and humble man but later on he took a negative attitude to Islam and wrote some books against Islam under the sponsorship of the Jew Abū ‘Īsā b. Lāvi. Ibn al-Jawzi threatened him, saying; “On the Day of Resurrection God would be more severe with him than with Satan.”<sup>641</sup>

In *Kitāb al-Zumurrudh* Rāwandī refuted arguments for the truthfulness of prophecy based on miracles. He said that people had established the rising and setting of stars from their observations, and had not needed prophets in the least for that.<sup>642</sup>

The other account claims that in his book, *Kitāb al-Zumurrudh* al-Rāwandī collected arguments both for and against belief in prophecy. Unfortunately some

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640 - Kutluer, “Islam Heresiografi Tarihinden: Ibnu’r Ravendi’nin Bir Mulhid ve Dehri Olarak Portresi”, *Bilgi ve Hikmet*, (Turkish Mounthly journal), Istanbul, 1995, vol. 9, p. 130-153..

641 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, *Classical Islamic Philosophy*, p. 53.

642 - *Ibid.*, p. 48.

time later Shirāzī (1572-1641) quotes only arguments which are against prophecy, without mentioning those of Rawandī's answers. For this reason we cannot be certain of his real aims and ideas.<sup>643</sup>

Some other accounts claimed that al-Rāwandī's teacher Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq wrote down some ideas of Brahma as a heresiographer to stand as protector to these heretical ideas. Rāwandī examined his master's ideas minutely, and rejected them in his own book *Kitāb al-Zumurrudh*. Later orthodox Muslims attacked these ideas supposing they were Rāwandī's own. However, either al-Māturīdī<sup>644</sup> or Shirāzī did not accept the negative common opinions which misleadingly were attributed to Rāwandī. In his book, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, Māturīdī claimed that al-Rāwandī wrote strongly to reject anti-Islamic creeds, quoting some parts of *Zumurrudh* to prove his ideas.<sup>645</sup>

## 2- Rāzī:

In Islamic history Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzī (864-925) was one of the most popular physicians. He admired his Greek predecessors such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates (d. c.430 B.C.) and Galen (129-c.200). It is notable that al-Rāzī followed a method like Aristotle. In all subjects he first summarised everything from Greek and Indian and then conducted his own research. Although he took Socrates and Hippocrates as examples, if he discovered something better than his predecessors, he added to the philosopher's works or claimed his own original ideas. Rāzī was perhaps the first to criticise Aristotle's philosophy

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643 - Kutluer, "İslam Heresiografisi Tarihinden: İbnu'r Ravendi'nin Bir Mulhid ve Dehri Olarak Portresi", *Bilgi ve Hikmet*, (Turkish Monthly journal), Istanbul, 1995, vol. 9, p. 130-153.

644 - Abū Mansur Muḥammad. Ḥanafī theologian of Mātūrīdī in Samarqand, Jurist and Qur'ān commentator. He was the founder of a doctrinal school Mātūrīdiyya which later came to be considered one of the two orthodox Sunnī schools of theology, the other being the school of al-Ash'ariyya. He argued against the positions of the Mu'tazila, of the Karamiyya, of the Imāmi Shi'a and of the Ismā'īlīs. He also refuted the views of Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Manichaeans.

645 - Kutluer, "İslam Heresiografisi Tarihinden: İbnu'r Ravendi'nin Bir Mulhid ve Dehri Olarak Portresi", *Bilgi ve Hikmet*, (Turkish Monthly journal), Istanbul, 1995, vol. 9, p. 130-153.



systematically and may have indirectly influenced the writings of John Stuart Mill (1806-1873).<sup>646</sup>

We have little knowledge of the details of Rāzī's chronology. Rāzī was born in Rayy but Arabs do not use the name of 'Rayyī' and so called him Rāzī (from Rayy). Some sources say that before became a philosopher and physician he was a moneychanger. He was appointed to the head of the hospital in his own town before he was thirty two years old. After that he was transferred to the Baghdad hospital and became an authority on medicine in the Islamic world. He died of a cataract illness since he did not accept medical treatment mentioning that he had seen too much of this world and he did not want to see any more.<sup>647</sup>

Rāzī wrote more than 200 books which contained information on medicine, theology, logic and metaphysics. Unfortunately only a small number of these books and a series of fragments have come down to us. Al-Rāzī's philosophy Boer a strong affinity to Plato's ideas, pre-Socratic philosophy, and some Indian sources. His main book about metaphysics, *Articles on Metaphysics (Maqālah fī ma' ba'd al-Ṭabī'yah)*,<sup>648</sup> contains many references and quotations from ancient Greek philosophers such as Plotinus, Porphyry and Democritus. His other metaphysical work, "Divine Speech" (*Kalām al-'Ilāhī*), contains some ideas from Pythagoras, Empedocles and Anaxagoras.<sup>649</sup>

Although Paul Kraus neglected the Ḥarranians' influence on al-Rāzī's writing, some Muslim authorities such as Shharrastānī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rūzī claimed that al-Rāzī's metaphysics was originally borrowed from Ḥarranian Sabacans thinkers. Like Rāwandī, al-Rāzī was one of the instigators of Ḥarranian's ideas and other heretical sources.

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646 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science In the Muslim World*, p. 104.

647 - Fakhry, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 97.

648 - Paul Kraus discovered al-Rāzī's notable book, *Articles on Metaphysics (Maqālah fī ma' ba'd al-Ṭabī'yah)* and published in 1943.

649 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 151.

According to Rāzī, philosophy is not the exclusive domain of the aristocrat, on the contrary, philosophy can be understood by every human being. Al-Rāzī established his philosophy on the five eternal principles, the Creator, the World Soul, Matter, Absolute Time and Absolute Space. This idea was not like the Islamic idea of creation which contains only one eternal principal which is God. At the same time this idea was against the idea of Aristotle which contains only two eternal principles; God and shapeless Matter.

The first eternal matter was the Creation; al-Rāzī claimed that the creation of everything out of nothing by God is not logical. If God had been able to create anything out of nothing why did he need matter! Because God is able to create every place easily.<sup>650</sup>

The second eternal principle was the 'first matter'; Rāzī, under the influence of Plato and pre-Socratic philosophers, particularly Democritus, claimed that before the creation of the world there were atoms which produced the other elements such as soil, air, fire, water. According to Aristotle, motion depended on the nature of matter. But Rāzī, like Democritus, claimed that the motion of atoms does not depend on their inner attribute but rather on the atoms own weight. If they are heavy they will go to heaven, if not, they will go to earth.<sup>651</sup>

The third eternal principle was "the soul of the world" which was Rāzī's profession of the Pythagorean-Platonic doctrine of transmigration of the soul. According to al-Rāzī the soul was originally living in a Divine World and it was enamoured with matter. God then assisted it and created this world with unlimited matter. In this creation reason was given by God to human beings to remind the soul that it was a member of the Divine World before it came to this world. According to al-Rāzī we can regain this intelligible Divine World by studying philosophy.<sup>652</sup>

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650 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 102.

651 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 52, 53.

652 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 110.



Al-Rāzī's fourth eternal principle is "absolute space" which was denied by Aristotle and other Aristotelians. They claimed that space is not exist separately from the body; it is only the logically concept. Al- Rāzī claimed that there are two spaces; relative space and absolute space. Absolute space is unlimited and independent of the body because it existed before the creation of this world. But relative space is the extent of a particular body.

The fifth eternal principle, 'time', like space Rāzī draws a distinction between universal and determinate time. Again al-Rāzī opposed the definition of time as a measure of the motion on the space. But from al-Rāzī's perspective time is accepted as an independent substance which existed before the creation of this world. One second of time is the measure of motion.

Rāzī was a great thinker both in philosophy and science (especially regarding medicine). The view of orthodox Muslims of al-Rāzī was that he was an infidel since he accepted eternal existents beside God and rejected revelation and prophecy. According to al-Rāzī, God gave the light of reason, therefore it was possible to find the truth without following the prophets.

Unlike most other Muslim thinkers Rāzī denied the reconciliation of philosophy with religion because, according to him, reason and revelation are different subject matter. Therefore philosophy and religion cannot be used in place of one another. He also claimed that reason is superior to all revelations. This appears to contradict his statement that "reason and revelation are different subject matters".

### Conclusion:

If the present materiel, concerning Dahriyya, is authentic, one can accept that the origin of the Dahriyya derived from outside of the Islamic teaching, such as atheistic Greek philosophy, Hermetic ideas, the Sabaeans religious beliefs as well as other eastern religions including the Manichaeans and the Mazdaist faiths. However, we have insufficient knowledge of both al-Rāzī's and al-Rawandī's chronology, since they have only been rediscovered by modern scholars in recent years. It would be better to wait before drawing any conclusions about these two

philosophers until contemporary research has progressed regarding their own philosophical works and other comparative studies on Islamic philosophy.

### C- THE BRETHERN OF PURITY (*IKHWĀN AL-ŞAFĀ'*)

#### Introduction

The previous chapter maintained Muslim thinkers received the Greek philosophy both by the authentic and apocryphal way. Pythagorean ideas were favourable for use on spirituality because of their mystical nature and relationship with the Orphic religion.<sup>653</sup> Briefly, the Pythagoreans claimed that since all things were determined by number, to listen to music and to learn numbered harmony would supply the purification and liberation of the soul. Pythagorean thinkers also believed the human soul is Divine but has been imprisoned in the body. At the same time they believed in the transmigration of the soul from one body to another.

After the second century B.C. Pythagoreanism mixed with Neoplatonism, and Aristotelian (Peripatetic) ideas. Then in the ninth century B.C. this eclectic heritage was translated into Arabic by way of the Hellenistic inspiration of the Muslims, and it grew in popularity. Therefore Muslim thinkers were influenced by Neoplatonism and Neopythagoreanism which contained both eastern wisdom, mysticism and a peculiarly western, scientific dimension. Ikhwān al-Şafa' arose among the Muslim intellectual and used Pythagorean thought to reconcile Greek philosophy and Muslim faith.

#### 1- Rising of the Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwān al-Şafā'*):

After the death of their Shī'i Imām Ismā'īl in 760 a group of Ismā'īlī thinkers established a secret circle at Baṣra to discuss and propagate their world view against the 'Abbāsids Caliphs.<sup>654</sup> However Ian Richard Netton in his book *Seek Knowledge Thought and Travel in the House of Islam* commented that the Ikhwān were not

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653 - Orphism, is a term derived from poems falsely ascribed to the mystical singer Orpheus. In 6th century B.C. Orphic religion was composed by Pythagorean in Italy.

654 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim philosophy, p. 164.



themselves Ismā'īlīs<sup>655</sup> but they only used some Ismā'īlī motives.<sup>656</sup> Although the Brethren of Purity believed that Islam was true best and Muḥammad was the last Prophet, they were also liberal in their religious views. Their creed was composed of the holy books of all celestial religions and sects because according to the Brethren all existing religions at best serve as so many ladders to arrive at Divine reality.<sup>657</sup>

According to al-Sijistānī's (c.913-c.987 *Vessel of Wisdom (Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma)*) the active masters of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* were listed as follows; Abū Sulaymān al-Bustī, Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Zanjānī, Abū Aḥmad al-Nahrajūrī, al-Aufī, Zaid b. Rifā'a. The Brethren described themselves in their epistles as a group of thinkers who attacked importance to the truth and make light of the world and its allurements.<sup>658</sup>

-Writings: They wrote fifty two separate treatises (*rasā'il*) and one summary (*jāmi'a*) in encyclopaedic form which exhibit a Neopythagorean and Neoplatonic character. These treatises are entitled *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* was published around 970 A.D. Treatises of the Brethren of Purity *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* was the first encyclopaedia of science, religion and philosophy in the Islamic world. These treatises contained many branches of knowledge at that time. Fourteen epistles deal with logic and mathematics, also covering metaphysics, eleven deal with mysticism -together with magic- and astrology, seventeen with natural sciences (astronomy, meteorology, geography, botany, zoology, psychology, embryology, physics, chemistry, astrology). These epistles have numerical classifications such as the number of 'four': four elements, four seasons, four directions, four bodily desires.<sup>659</sup>

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655 - One of the main branches of the Shī'i sects in the 10th-12 century. They tried to reach political power in Egypt and North Africa. They believed that in the eventual new age of the seventh Imām, a kind of universal religion would emerge that was independent of the law of all organised religions.

656 - Netton, *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the Hose of Islam*, p. 28.

657 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*, p. 55

658 - Fakhry, *A History of Muslim philosophy*, p. 164.

659 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 34, 35.

According to Ian Richard Netton two major themes of the Epistles of Brethren, are purity and wisdom. Since they were ready to accept knowledge and wisdom inherent in every science, book and way of thought, Netton called them “wisdom Muslims”.<sup>660</sup>

## 2- Philosophy of *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*:

It is true that the philosophy of the Brethren was not pure philosophy, but a kind of romantic idealism since it was influenced by the early sufi movements. Despite the fact that the Brethren philosophy had a strong Pythagorean element in it, they also collected the positive aspects of other creeds. For this reason the Brethren's philosophy is an eclectic form. In addition to Greek philosophy, they gleaned ideas from Persian, Indian, Jewish, and Christian Scriptures. For instance with regard to the life of Christ, the Brethren used many versions of the Gospels more than the Qur'ān.<sup>661</sup> Because the views of the Brethren were liberal they were not satisfied with religions or sects holding to a single philosophy.

Although it is quite difficult to give a systematic account about the philosophy of the Brethren because of their eclecticism and allegorical interpretations, we can classify the philosophy of the Brethren under some philosophical headings.

-Epistemology or theory of knowledge of the Brethren: The epistemology of *Ikhwān al Ṣafā'* drew from an account of Platonic dualism; soul and body. The soul of the human being comes into being from rational and spiritual elements, even though, the soul, according to the Brethren is independent from the body and comes originally from the realm of the spirit or the realm of reason. Due to this reason the laws of logic and axioms of mathematics come into the soul from this realm. Humanity's soul is already filled with this abstract knowledge before it comes to this world. Like Socrates, the Brethren believed that a human's present

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660 - Netton, *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the Hose of Islam*, p. 38.

661 - *Ibid.*, p. 36.



knowledge potentially exists in the soul of the individual. Teachers only remind students of those truths that already embedded in their soul.<sup>662</sup>

According to the Brethren there are three sources of knowledge; the senses, reason, and Divine inspiration. Sensory perception informs us about material objects. But in this first source is limited by reason, which produce abstract knowledge such as mathematics, logic and metaphysics. In order to gain knowledge of the meaning of life, God and the attributes of the soul, reason cannot supply with any more information. Consequently, this kind of knowledge must be received from a wise master, who receives from the *imāms* the knowledge which the Prophets gained from God.<sup>663</sup>

The main purpose of the Brethren was to purify the soul and undergo a harsh discipline in mathematics and logic, the science of number being held to be the source of additional knowledge and wisdom.<sup>664</sup> Whoever knows the nature of numbers can comprehend the essential knowledge of existence. This kind of soul can then keep itself away from the bodily attachments. In this way the soul will be saved from bodily sufferings and will attain eternal happiness. The question soon arose as to how the souls of those individuals who lack the ability to study logic and mathematics can be purified? The Brethren recommended these people follow religious and mystical exercises for the purification of their souls.<sup>665</sup>

On another level knowledge was divided into three classes; mathematics, physics and metaphysics. Logic, geometry, astronomy, geography, music arts, crafts, psychology, categories and ethics were put under the title of mathematics. They concentrated on the following concepts: matter, space, time, motion, cosmogony, production, destruction, elements, meteorology, mineralogy, the essence of nature, botany, zoology, anatomy and anthropology, man's body and philosophy. These concepts were categorised under the title of physics as with Aristotle. Metaphysics

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662 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 37.

663 - Qadir, Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World, p. 54.

664 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim philosophy, p. 170, 171.

665 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 38.

incorporates theology, rational physics, microcosms, resurrection, causality, friendship, faith, Divine law, prophecy, incorporeal politics and magic.<sup>666</sup>

The Brethren also had some important theories concerning the functions of the brain. Contrary to many ancient philosophers, the Brethren believed that the brain to be the centre of the thinking process along with sensations and intelligence. They even gave details of the faculties and functions of the brain. They held that perception begins in the senses and is carried by the nerves to the imaginative centre which lies in the front part of the brain, the process continues to the reflective faculties of the brain which lie in the middle part of brain. From there it goes to memory which is at the back of the brain. At the end the process reaches the expressive faculty, acting and talking.<sup>667</sup>

-Metaphysics and Cosmology: The Brethren rejected the theory that the basic matter is co-eternal with God, affirming the latter to be above all categories of existence. They did believe the Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation, which was an interpretation of Plotinus to adapt the idea of Plato and Aristotle to Jewish theology. All existence emanated from God by an indirect way. The first emanation from God was intelligence (*al-'aql*), then the world-soul, third primitive matter, fourth nature, fifth spatial matters, sixth the world of spheres, seventh the elements of the planetary world, and finally essences. In reality however, these eight essences are one as they all emanated from the same source.<sup>668</sup>

The cosmology of the Brethren was dependent upon their metaphysical views derived from Aristotelian ideas. According to the Brethren there are 1029 large heavenly bodies. There are seven planets which are round concave and transparent. The nearest one to us is the Moon and the furthest is Mercury. Two more spheres exist above these, those of the fixed stars and the empyrean. The motion of the empyrean (from east to west and again from west to east) brings about day and night. In their view the secession of the seasons depends on the position of the Sun.

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666 - Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*, p. 56.

667 - *Ibid.*

668 - Sheikh, M. Saeed. *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 38, 39.



Like Aristotle the Brethren accepted that the motion of the heavenly bodies is circular and for this reason concluded that the heavenly bodies have different attributes from the sublunary world.<sup>669</sup>

To clarify their ideas the Brethren used the human body as an analogy. Like Stoic thinkers<sup>670</sup>, the Brethren held that the body of man summarises the whole universe. For instance, the head, the breast, the stomach and the belly correspond to the four elements (fire, air, water, earth). and the seven spiritual powers (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, speech and thought) corresponds to the seven planets.<sup>671</sup>

-Ethics: The Brethren used the intellect like a touchstone in order to determine what was an erroneous deed. Since they believed that moral principles must be categorical, for this reason could not be relaxed. Virtues is its own reward and a virtuous deed should not be done for any benefit.<sup>672</sup> However, they accepted also astronomical influences that the movement of the stars effects the capabilities of people. These kinds of tensions reflect the Brethren's eclecticism and encyclopaedic form. The Psychological aspect of the Brethren's philosophy is based on astrological theory. According to the Brethren a person born under the sign of good fortune is destined for the Divine realm. At the same time they recommended to their followers that they renounce the world and struggle to practice virtue.

Regarding the purification of the soul the Brethren believed that the human soul is derived directly from God while the body is derived from matter. For this reason the body wants to seek the ephemeral pleasures and the soul wants to return to God. According to the Brethren all virtues come from the soul, such as reason, knowledge and the love of God. Bad things such as ignorance, folly, and lewdness, originally come from the body. According to the Brethren "perfect human" contains the best

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669 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 171-172.

670 - A philosophical movement which flourished in Greece and Rome around 300 B.C. The founder of Stoa philosophy is Zeno of Citium but it was formulated by Cleanthes and Chrysippus. Their ideas become a common expression to indicate acceptance of misfortune without complaint.

671 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 174-175.

672 - Qadir, Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World. p. 58.

attributes of all the civilisations. Their doctrine of the perfect man (*insān al-kāmil*) is that he is of Persian origin, Arabian in faith, Babylonian in education, Hebrew in astuteness, and a disciple of Christ in conduct, as pious as a Syrian monk, as a Greek in the natural sciences, as an Indian in the interpretation of mysteries.<sup>673</sup>

### Conclusion:

The Brethren's philosophy was eclectic including both religious wisdom and philosophical elements. In philosophy the Brethren set out a formulation which included Neoplatonic emanation, Pythagorean numeral method, Aristotelian logic and psychology, as well as Ptolemaic astronomy. They were influenced both by Islamic movements such as the Shī'a, and Mu'tazila, and external cultures includes Persian, Indian, and Christian. However they were not satisfied with only one religion and one sect alone.

The Brethren's system contained many contradictions and absence of systematisation because of their eclecticism. For instance they accepted the Mu'tazilī view of free will but also believed that all earthly events and human actions were effected by the stars. The Brethren's thought affected both Muslim philosophers and sufi movements. At the same time some argued that their influence was felt in Europe by indirect channels, and affected moral theories and pantheistic creeds.

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673 - Sheikh, M. Saeed. Islamic Philosophy, p. 40.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PERIPATETIC<sup>674</sup> (MASHSHAI) PHILOSOPHY

#### Introduction

The philosophical translation from Greek to Arabic started around the eight century A.D. and continued for two hundred years. Initially the scope of these were limited by the caliphs' concerns over their individual health and some other practical reasons. Accordingly the priority became the translation of medical texts.<sup>675</sup>

However, Muslim thinkers soon became dissatisfied with this limited situation and wanted to learn the background behind these scientific works. Translators began to look at philosophical texts, particularly significant being a number of Aristotelian works including the *Categories*, *Metaphysics*, *Analytics*, and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Also Euclid's *Elements* and Porphyry's *Isagoge* were translated into Arabic. However, most of these translations did not come directly from the Greek texts but from Syrian versions. For this reason Muslim thinkers without a few exceptions did not receive the original Greek texts until the time of Ibn Rushd (1126-1198).

Whilst amongst the Muslim thinkers the best known Greek philosopher was Aristotle. The majority of works on him came from the late Neoplatonist and Pythagorean schools. Therefore Pythagorean, Plotinus and Aristotelian ideas were embraced and fused with Islamic wisdom to form a distinctively Islamic philosophy.

However, it is perhaps ironic that the two apocryphal works entitled *Theologia Aristotle* and *Liber de Causis* had the greatest impact on the ideas of the early Muslim philosophers. Unfortunately *Theologia Aristotle* despite its name, did not belong to Aristotle and it even has opposed elements of Aristotle's own views. In

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674 - The original name of peripatetic is peripatos "a covered walking place". The term peripatetic refers to a method of teaching while walking about, known to have been used by Pythagoras, for example and assumed to have been adapted by Aristotle. (See 'The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Edited by Edwards Paul, vol.: 6, , p. 92).

675 - Flew, A Dictionary of Philosophy, p.180.

fact, this work was a translation of parts of Platinus' *Enneads* which was a book written with the aim of reaching a reconciliation between Aristotle and Plato. Similar to this, a Neoplatonist in the first century A.D. had embodied a new text but translators mistakenly assumed that it belonged to Aristotle and called it *Theologia Aristotle*. Even Fārābī wrote a separate book to solve this problem under the title of the *Harmony Between the Views of Plato and Aristotle (al-Jām' Bayn al-Ra'yay al-Ḥakīm Āflātūn al-Ilāhī wa Aristūtalīs)*. The other work entitled *Liber de Causis* by Proclus was transmitted by Christians who also wrongly recognised it as one of Aristotle's works and called *The Elements of Theology*.<sup>676</sup> Another misunderstanding developed over Porphyry's work entitled *Isagoge*. Porphyry was a disciple of Philo (c. 30 B.C.-c. 40 A.D) who wrote a book which included five important concepts (species, genus, different, property, accident) that were prepared from Aristotle's '*Organon*'. However, this book itself soon became recognised as being part of Aristotle's main work '*Organon*'.<sup>677</sup>

#### A- KINDĪ:

Kindī -Latin *Alkindus*- was the first of the Muslim philosopher-scientists and the founder of the Islamic Peripatetic (*Mashshā'i*) school. In fact, al-Kindī was the first Arab philosopher in the history of Muslim philosophy and for this reason was called the "Philosopher of the Arabs". Al-Kindī (c. 801-873) had an encyclopaedic knowledge both in science and philosophy. He was an Arabian philosopher, astrologer, physician and even budget director at the court of al-Ma'mūn.

Kindī was influenced by the theologies of the Mu'tazila and Greek philosophical doctrines, which were transmitted to him through the fresh translations of the Neoplatonist heritage. Al-Kindī was not literate in Greek, although he was in fact a promoter of the translation and champion of the introduction of Greek and Indian writing into the Muslim world.<sup>678</sup>

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676 - Ibid.

677 - Ibrahim and Sagadeev, *Classical Islamic Philosophy*, p. 8, 9; and Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p.

678 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 66.



Life and writings: al-Kindī came from the Arab tribe of Kindah in Southern Arabia and his family name (*nisba*) was 'Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb Ibn Ishāq al-Kindī.<sup>679</sup> In some accounts it is mentioned that al-Kindī's grandfather, al-Ashās, was King of Kindah and accepted the invitation of the Prophet Muḥammad and converted to Islam. Al-Kindī's father Ishāq, was a ruler of Kūfa at the time of the caliph Maḥdī and Hārūn al-Rashīd.<sup>680</sup> Al-Kindī was born in Kūfa at the end of the eighth century, and after some time moved to Baṣra. In his early life he studied religion, philosophy and mathematics in Baṣra and Kūfa.<sup>681</sup>

Kindī wrote many epistles in encyclopaedic form but unfortunately most of these were lost. These epistles were concerned variously with philosophy, geometry, astronomy, astrology, arithmetic, music, medicine, psychology, meteorology, politics, and numerous other subject matters. Al-Kindī's philosophical epistles were published for the first time by Abū Rīda under the title of *Philosophical Epistles of al-Kindī (Rasā'il al-Kindī al-Falsafiyah)*<sup>682</sup>. Another important work of al-Kindī was *Hudūd al-Ashyā' wa 'l-Rusūmuhā* which he wrote in encyclopaedic form and tried to investigate the cause of sophistic discussions, as well as show the relationship between the thinking process and language.

Like the Mu'tazila, al-Kindī wrote about the "justice of God" and "refutation of the Manichaeans". He also wrote concerning "the unity of God", "free will" and 'righteousness'. This is a sign that he was educated in the Mu'tazila milieu. Because of this background al-Kindī in his book *Refutation of the Argument of*

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679 - Nasr, *Science and Civilisation in Islam*, p. 43.

680 - Kaya, *Türk-Islam Felsefesi Ders Notlari*, (Lecturer notes on Turkish- Islamic Philosophy), Istanbul, 1984.

681 - These two cities were set up by the Caliph 'Umar I, in 628 and had become the learning centres of science and language. Serious philological courses and theological discussions were also held at these centres.

682 - Kaya, *Türk-Islam Felsefesi Ders Notlari*, (Lecturer notes on Turkish- Islamic Philosophy), Istanbul, 1984.

*Atheists* utilised proofs from the Qur'ān, defended the necessity of prophethood against the Indian and Hellenistic idea that revelation was unnecessary.<sup>683</sup>

**Philosophy:** An important contribution towards our understanding of al-Kindī's philosophy can be found in his epistles entitled the *First Philosophy (Falsafa al-Ūlā)* in which he started by giving the literal meaning of philosophy as "love of wisdom". After this, al-Kindī proceeded to give and interpret all the definitions of philosophy from ancient Greece down to his time. At the end of this study al-Kindī briefly gave his definition of philosophy: "Philosophy is to know the realities of things in the limitation of human capacity."<sup>684</sup>

It was al-Kindī who, for the first time in the history of Muslim thought, had classified human knowledge. He divided knowledge into two general groups, theoretical and practical. Theoretical knowledge consisted of metaphysics, psychology, the arithmetical and physical sciences. The practical sciences were divided into two sub-groups: ethics and policy, with the latter being further subdivided policy into two branches known as political and house management.

Another important contribution of al-Kindī was in the area of scientific process and the importance of quantitative methods. According to Plato, nobody could be a philosopher without first being thoroughly competed in mathematics.<sup>685</sup> Al-Kindī made clear that the study of mathematics was not a part of the study of philosophy, but served in the study of all theoretical subjects. Again, according to al-Kindī, mathematics teaches us the science of number, harmony, geometry and astronomy, and it is upon this that our secondary knowledge will be built.<sup>686</sup> Al-Kindī was recognised as the first to apply mathematics to medicine, optics, music and calculating the effect of drugs by the proportions of the mixtures. In his book *The Making of Humanity*, Briffault claims that Muslim thinkers such as al-Kindī and al-

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683 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 99, 100.

684 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 92.

685 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 100.

686 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 92.



Khwārazmī were the first in the history of scientific thought to realise the importance of quantitative methods.<sup>687</sup>

**Theory of Emanation:** Throughout the history of philosophy the question concerning the relationship of God to creation was the most difficult problem. Neoplatonist thinkers in the *Theology of Aristotle*, stated in their doctrine of emanation that God did not create the world through an act of volition, but on the contrary, everything emanated from Him due to necessity. Like the other Aristotelian Muslim philosophers, al-Kindī held that everything emanated from God, not directly but through intermediary agencies. The implication is that creation needed neither the will nor consciousness of God. Everything emanating from Him as a necessary result of His creativity.

**Cosmology:** In al-Kindī's cosmology every object was seen as a mirror of the whole universe or alternatively a microcosm of the macrocosm. From here al-Kindī reached the conclusion that all things in the universe must come from one single existent, with all higher existence affecting the lower, the lower existence having no influence upon the higher. This idea seems to reflect the Neoplatonist emanation theory.

However al-Kindī's most important cosmological idea was his theory about the "five essences" which are mentioned in his treatise *On the Five Essences*. These five essences are: matter, form, movement, time, and space. In his theory, al-Kindī stressed that the form of matter does not have a perceptible existence without the other important essences. Because al-Kindī believed that there were two kinds of form: the first serves to give description about things, such as quality, quantity, place and time; the second produces things from formless matter, thus the matter then starts to move and become perceptible in space. Like Aristotle, al-Kindī accepted that there were six kinds of motion. Two of them were variations in substance as either generated or corruptible. The other two were variations in quantity by increase or decrease. The last two types of motion were variation in quality and change in position.

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687 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 42-43.

Within al-Kindī's cosmological theory, time and movement are the measure of each other as time shows how many units a movement takes whilst movement shows how time unites from one place to another. In other words, without the movement of things we cannot measure time. Al-Kindī's concept of space was defined as the imaginary surrounding of things, because if these things were taken away space cannot exist. Therefore, these five basic concepts (matter, space, movement, time, form) necessitate each other and all of them must have been created at the same time. If we accept that they were created at different times then we would have to accept the possibility of antinomies.<sup>688</sup>

**Soul and Body:** al-Kindī believed that the human soul was bound up with its body, but in its spiritual essence independent of the body and belonging to the Divine world. Furthermore, he claimed that the soul feels as if this world is not its home and that it gains no happiness or pleasure in bodily desires. Thus the human soul cannot be satisfied with the changeable world, but yearns instead for the stability and permanence which it will find only in the realm of reason and spirit.

In his treatise *On the Intellect*, al-Kindī describes the number of degrees of reason to be four. These are: Active intellect ('*aql al-fa'āl*'), potential intellect or reasoning capacity ('*aql hayūlānī*'), acquired intellect ('*aql al-mustafād*'), and intellect in action ('*aql bil-fī'*') which is the activity of man himself. While the first belongs to God alone, the remaining three can be found in the human soul. According to al-Kindī the active intellect is the source of fundamental laws of thought, such as mathematical axioms, eternal truths and spiritual verities. Al-Kindī believed also that the revelation of the prophets and inspiration of the poets as well as that of the scientists and philosophical discoveries comes from active intellect.

Al-Kindī was recognised as the first Muslim philosopher, who never contemplated giving up the orthodox Islamic faith. In the sense he appears as a scholastic theologian within Islam, one who defended the fundamental Islamic beliefs against those of the materialists, Manichaeans and agnostics.

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688 - Ibid., p. 44-45.



The main criticisms of al-Kindī's philosophy have been directed at his role in seeking to bridge the gap between philosophy and Islamic dogmas. Whilst the more orthodox criticised al-Kindī for applying the philosophical process to the revealed texts, the strict philosophical milieu criticised al-Kindī for his affinity with the Mu'tazilīs and his blending philosophy with religion. For this reason the second group of thinkers did not accept al-Kindī to be a pure philosophy. The eclecticism of al-Kindī stemmed from his own philosophical creed. He mentioned that we should not be ashamed to accept the truth and assimilate it from whatever source it comes to us, even if it is comes through former generations and foreign peoples.<sup>689</sup>

Al-Kindī was highly respected in the West both in the medieval and Renaissance period, to the extent that he was considered one of the great judges of astrology. For instant, Cardano himself called al-Kindī one of the twelve great intellectual figures of humanity.<sup>690</sup>

Although no doubt al-Kindī was regarded as the first peripatetic Muslim philosopher, he did not introduce a complete philosophical system, because in his time the translation of Greek and Neoplatonist texts had not been completed, and also as a Muslim he was in the service of Islam rather than pure philosophy. For this in al-Kindī's understanding Philosophy was a tool to understand Islam. In this respect the real representative of Muslim Peripatetics (*Mashshā'i*) philosophy came in the person of Fārābī and his school.<sup>691</sup> Al-Kindī had also affected the other peripatetic Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd.

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689 - Radhkrishnan, History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, vol. II, p. 131.

690 - Nasr, Science and Civilisation in Islam. p 44.

691 - In this area Ian Richard Netton, wrote a book which examines the thought of al-Fārābī and his great students as the major medieval thinkers. In his book Netton concentrates specially on the area of epistemology of Fārābī's disciples including Yahyā b. 'Adī, al-Sijistānī, al-Āmirī and al-Tawḥīdī, who are normally neglected. (See Al-Fārābī and His School, by Ian Richard Netton, Routledge: London and New York, 1992).

## B- FĀRĀBĪ (c.870-950):

Fārābī was the first Turkish philosopher. In the medieval West he was known as Avennasar or Fārābīus. al-Kindī's eclectic philosophy was developed by Fārābī and he produced a number of commentaries, on Aristotle's '*Organon*' and Porphyry's '*Isagoge*' as well as Plato's Dialogues. Since he spent all his energy on Aristotle's writing he was accorded the title of "the second teacher" (*al-mu'allim al-thāni*), being second to Aristotle.<sup>692</sup>

Beside philosophy and logic Fārābī went on to study grammar, philosophy, music, mathematics and various other sciences. Fārābī thus went beyond al-Kindī, who naturalised philosophy as a kind of appropriate handmaiden of revealed truth. On the other hand, Fārābī differed from Dahriyya like al-Rāzī by not condemning the prophets as impostors. Fārābī, like Plato, allotted an important and indispensable function to organised religion.<sup>693</sup>

-Life and writings: Although the exact year of Fārābī's birth is unknown, it is generally accepted that he was born around 870 A.D. Fārābī was born into a military family<sup>694</sup> in Wasīj a village near Fārāb in Turkistan. Fārābī somehow went to Baghdad and started to his education. In Baghdad first he learned Arabic with Abū Bakr Ibn al-Sarraj (c.875-928) and then he studied both logic and philosophy with the Christian scholars Mattā Ibn Yūnus (d.940) and Yuḥanna b. Haylān (d. c. between 908-932), who were late Alexandrian interpreters of Greek philosophy.<sup>695</sup>

Some accounts stated that in 941 Fārābī left Baghdad for Aleppo and there enjoyed the protection of the great patron of scientists and philosophers from the Ḥamdānīds Shī'i dynasty, Saif al-Dawla al-Ḥamdānī (918-967). After a later journey to Egypt he returned to Syria and died shortly afterwards in 950 in Damascus at the approximate age of eighty or more.

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692 - De Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 109.

693 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 2, p, 779.

694 - His father was one of the qā'id jaysh (general) from the Turkish bodyguards of the Caliph.

695 - Netton, Al-Fārābī and His School, p. 5.



Many accounts maintained that Fārābī was profoundly religious in spirit and lived an extremely simple life as an ordinary sufi.<sup>696</sup> Fārābī had a great influence both on the Muslim philosophers and Western philosophies. For this reason he was recognised as the great representative of Muslim Aristotelian philosophy after the Christian thinkers.<sup>697</sup>

Fārābī also wrote treatises on Physics including *The Book of Minerals, De Plants, Meteorology* and *De Motu Animalium* which contained his views on the dualism of matter and form, and the necessity of an efficient and final cause of motion. His logical treatise can be listed as follows: *Necessary and Existential Premises, Commentary on Analytica Posteriora, Commentary on Topica, Commentary on Sophistica, Commentary on De Interpretation, Commentary on De Categoriac,* and *Propositions and Syllogism.*

Fārābī's influences on Muslim philosophers came through his masterly exposition of the thought of Plato and Aristotle. Fārābī wrote a book entitled *Philosophy of Aristotle* in which he investigated the whole range of Aristotelian philosophy from logic to metaphysics. In these works Fārābī's essential aim concerned the nature of human happiness and its relation to ethics.

Although the majority of Fārābī's works concentrated on the Aristotelian corpus he also wrote some commentaries on Plato's philosophy. For instance, in his book *On the Philosophy of Plato* Fārābī gave detailed information about Plato's philosophy and treatises. At the same time Fārābī was greatly influenced by Plato's *The Republic* and *The Laws*, and wrote two similar books entitled *al Madīnat al-Fāḍīla (The Virtuous City)* and *On Political Government (al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya)*. In these works Fārābī, like Plato, claimed that the rule of philosophy was essential for the perfect state and thus he concentrated on ethics and justice. The other treatise of Fārābī, *Book of the Attainment of Happiness*, elucidates his political ideas in terms of attaining contentment.

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696 - Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 158.

697 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 2, p. 778.

Fārābī achieved a reconciliation between the two great philosophers Aristotle and Plato in his book entitled the *Harmony Between the Viwes of Plato and Aristotle*. According to Fārābī Plato and Aristotle differ from each other only in method and practical life, their doctrines of wisdom being essentially the same.<sup>698</sup> Since In the above book Fārābī built his main philosophical ideas upon pseudo texts *Theologia of Aristotle* he often reached results which were far from the real creeds of Aristotle but close to the ideas of the Neoplatonists.

However, the main work of Fārābī is *The Enumeration of the Sciences (Iḥsā' al-'ulūm)*. Fārābī also wrote about some unusual subjects in books such as *What One Must Know Before Learning Philosophy* and *On Music (Kitāb al-Musīqa)*. In this treaties he, like Pythagorean, tried to draw interesting analogies between music and mathematics.

-Philosophy: Fārābī in his book, *What One Must Know Before Learning Philosophy*, detailed rules for teachers to train young students in philosophy. In this treatise he claimed that the best way to start in philosophy was to begin with the natural sciences. Fārābī, like al-Kindī, tried to show a perfect enumeration in science which could be used as a base for the study of philosophy and for the establishment of a thinking system.

Fārābī built his philosophy on two ideas: the first was the ready acceptance of the testimony of sense-experiences without testing them by the dialecticians, and the second was the failing of the Natural philosophers to appreciate what was transcendent. In other words, according to Fārābī, a philosophical thinking process can be based on the testimony of sense-experience if it is possible, as well as the possibility of metaphysics. On this ground he asserted that religion and philosophy could not be different because reason which the prove for the philosophy, is God's other revelation to humankind.<sup>699</sup>

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In his treatise entitled *The Enumeration of the Sciences*, Fārābī classified the sciences known in his day, under two main headings: theoretical and practical

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698 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 110.

699 - *Ibid.*, p. 127.



sciences. The theoretical sciences contained mathematics, physics, metaphysics, linguistics and logic. The practical sciences on the other hand were comprised of ethics, policy, jurisprudence, '*kalām*' and '*poetica*'. This classification had an enormous influence on both Muslim philosophers and Western scholastic thought.<sup>700</sup>

According to Fārābī, metaphysics can be divided into three main parts: ontology, theology and the first principles of the special sciences (*al-falsafatul ū'lā*). In his philosophy, Fārābī used these three metaphysical concepts in conjunction to each other.

Fārābī established his ontological ideas on the concept of 'Being' since it serves to define all other existence. First of all, Fārābī divided all existing beings into two categories: necessary and possible being. He claimed that the Necessary Being was only the real existence as non-existence of it was unthinkable. In other words, Necessary being exists by virtue of itself, and needs no external cause for its existence. Possible beings, on the other hand, can exist or not exist because their existence requires an external cause. Fārābī also held to a distinction between essence and existence. According to him all created beings consist of an essence to which existence is added. In other words, existence was not a necessary quality of essence but only a statement or an accident of essence because the contingent being received its existence from another thing. Thus according to Fārābī this world is only the thinkable being and does not itself exist.<sup>701</sup>

The possible being was also divided into two branches: potential and perfect being. Every created being before coming into existence had only the potentiality to exist. On the other hand if something already existed in this world Fārābī termed its being as perfect and actual. Thus, whilst the concept of actuality can be used for a present being, the concept of possible being can only be used for the potential becoming process.<sup>702</sup>

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700 - Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 159.

701 - Mc Greal, Great Thinker of The Eastern World, p. 449.

702 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 58, 59.

From here, Fārābī developed a theology to bring the proofs for the existence of God. His first proof was the classical motion theory which was derived from Aristotle. According to this theory, every object which moved received its motion from a mover. This mover needs another one and so on and so forth. As this causal chain cannot continue on backwards infinitely there must then be an immovable mover, and this is God. The second proof of Fārābī stems from the idea of contingent being. Whilst the non-existence of the necessary being is unthinkable, the contingent being must by definition receive its being from another, and so for this reason its state of non-existence is possible.<sup>703</sup>

Another of the main theological problems which Fārābī dealt with, was whether or not God was knowable. In his *Fuṣūṣ fi 'l-Ḥikam* Fārābī answered this question briefly by saying that God is something that mind cannot thoroughly know because of the limitations of our intellect. The infinitely perfect cannot be comprehended by one that is limited and imperfect. Nevertheless, Fārābī claimed that we could follow a purely logical way to prove that God in His attributes is one, simple, infinite, immutable, intelligent, living. However, before the creation of the universe we can attribute to God only an “infinite degree”.<sup>704</sup>

Fārābī began his ontology with the question “How could One become many?” In his theory the first emanation from the First Being is the First Intellect, which is capable of conceiving both its author and itself. Through this process rises the Second Intellect and the Second Intellect conceives its author and itself and then rises to the Third Intellect and fourth and so on until the tenth Intellect which provides the intermediary world between the incorporeal world and ours, which is the world of generation and corruption.<sup>705</sup> These intellects can be seen in correspondence to the spheres of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon, respectively. With the Tenth Intellect, the series of cosmic intellects is completed,

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703 - Ibid., p. 61.

704 - Ibid., p. 60.

705 - Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 161.



and with the Moon whose circular motions are determined by those cosmic intellects throughout all time.<sup>706</sup>

Fārābī considered that at the lowest level of this world lies primal matter, followed by the four elements of minerals, plants, animals and man. Thus the combination process began with the singularity of God until the complex existence of humanity emerged. Therefore, until humans emerge as a result of the final combination, this process, which is subject to the action of the heavenly bodies, goes on generating the higher and more complex entities in the sublunary world.<sup>707</sup>

According to Fārābī the causal influence exerted upon the earth by the heavenly bodies falls into two categories: astronomy and astrology. It is for this reason that Fārābī is often presumed to be an astrologer.<sup>708</sup> However, these ideas mainly come from Aristotle's beliefs in cosmology that the heavenly spheres possess souls and are perfect.

Logic: Fārābī's commentaries and paraphrases on Aristotle's Logic shows that he was one of the greatest logicians in the history of philosophy. Fārābī started to study logic under the Christian scholar, Yūḥannā Ibn Ḥaylān and Abū Bishr Mattā in Baghdad where he was to become the greatest logician in the Islamic world of his day.<sup>709</sup> He asserted that while grammar is limited to the language of one people, Logic, has to regulate the expression in language of the aggregate intelligence in to mankind. He divided logic into two main sections: definition and the doctrine of judgement. Ideas and their definition raised from sense-perception and come to mind as the necessary, the actual and the possible which are immediately certain. On these absolute grounds we can make judgements according to other definition which are absolutely known.<sup>710</sup>

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706 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 118.

707 - Ibid., p. 119.

708 - Ibid., p. 109.

709 - Mc Greal, Great Thinker of The Eastern World, p. 447.

710 - De Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 111.

**-Soul and Intellect:** According to Fārābī humanity is composed of existence, body and soul. Body is limited by space which is measurable and divisible, whilst the soul is beyond such physical qualities. The soul itself is independent of matter and its main function is intelligence. In this world humanity's supreme good is to attain knowledge, and after death humanity's soul becomes immortal. From this point some concluded that Fārābī believed that in the other world humans will be immortal and his/her punishment will be spiritual and not bodily.

Another important idea of Fārābī which was derived originally from Aristotle was his division of the intellect into three sections. The first section comprised of the active intellect (*al-'aql al-fa'al*) which is similar to the world of ideas of Plato, and Nous of Plotinus. The second section comprised the potential intellect (*al-'aql al-hayūlānī*) which is the latent capacity to acquire the eternal truths that subsist in the active intellect. The last section is acquired intellect (*al-'aql al-mustafād*) which is a learned knowledge.<sup>711</sup>

**-Politic and Ethics:** Fārābī adopted the view from Plato's *Republic* that politics and ethics should be used as a basis for establishing an ideal state and nation (*umma*) as well as a perfect world state similar to the ideal of the modern United Nations. In his treatise *The Virtuous City (al-Madīna al-Faḍīla)* Fārābī assigned the ideal of the perfect State to revelation and Prophethood. In this respect, Fārābī gave some essential views as to the basis of a community. He claimed that human beings have a strong desire to partake in community life which can only happen perfectly in a State. Fārābī's other idea was that since human beings are unequal and have various capacities for different functions, the State must plan for its citizen a place where their true nature can best be suited.<sup>712</sup>

In his conception of the "ideal city" Fārābī stresses that in a state the character of the ruler more important than regimes. This is why Fārābī gave detailed information about the attributes of the head of State. He suggested that a person to guide the destinies of the citizens of a State would need to have a perfect moral

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711 - The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Cyril Glassé, p. 121.

712 - Mc Greal, Great Thinker of The Eastern World, p. 447,448.



character similar to those of the prophets,<sup>713</sup> because it is the ideal of the prophet who mastered both wisdom (*ḥikma*) and spirituality that should be held up as an example of the perfect ruler for the state. In other words for Fārābī, a state will be bad if the head of state is bad, and conversely a state will be good if its head has good attributes.<sup>714</sup>

In short, according to Fārābī if a state loses its main aim which is to have a perfect moral character, it corrupts and becomes the city of ignorance. The city of ignorance will not know the real happiness and will tend to the false pleasures of life. According to Fārābī the ignorant city people will meet the fate of total annihilation.

### C- IBN SĪNĀ:

After Fārābī, the renowned intellectual figure of the Middle Ages was Ibn Sīnā (980-1037), who in the West is known as Avicenna or as the Spanish would pronounce it, *Aven Sīnā*. Ibn Sīnā was an encyclopaedic philosopher, physician, mathematician, astronomer and poet but he wrote in particular on natural philosophy, metaphysics, medicine and logic. Unlike his master Fārābī, he fused within his thinking Greek science and Oriental wisdom. In doing so oriental wisdom was given a philosophical form.<sup>715</sup> Therefore Islamic wisdom became dominant in post-Ibn Sīnā philosophy.

-Life and writings: Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Abdullāh Ibn Sīnā was born in Iṣfahān<sup>716</sup> near Bukhārā, of a Turkish mother and a Persian father. He was an extraordinarily precocious child and had memorised the Qur’ān by the age of ten and then learned grammar, geometry, physics, medicine and theology. At the age of seventeen Ibn Sīnā became physician to the Sāmānīd prince, Nūḥ Ibn Manṣūr,<sup>717</sup>

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713 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 66.

714 - De Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 123.

715 - Ibid., p. 134

716 - Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, p.167.

717 - De Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 132.

and several other sultans. He was made vizier in Ḥamadān in Persia, where he earned the title "Prince of Physicians". After the death of his father he travelled to Khurāsān and the other main cities of Iran, but was never to cross the borders of the Iranian world. In Jurjān he began to write his great book *Canon of Medicine* (*al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*) and consorted with the prince Abū Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī (1003-1083)<sup>718</sup> who enabled him to teach publicly. Ibn Sīnā was often caught in the middle of wars because of his relationship with the kings and princes. The effects of war led Ibn Sīnā to travel widely and live in many places in Persia, including Merv, Iṣfahān and Kazwin. He returned to Ḥamadān where he died.

Ibn Sīnā was the author of some two hundreds works on science, religion and philosophy. His main works were *The Book of Healing* (*Kitāb al-Shifā*)- known in the west erroneously as 'Sanatio' or 'Sufficientia',- *The Book of Salvation* (*Kitāb al-Najāt*"), which is a summary of *al-Shifā*, and *Canon of Medicine* (*al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*) which remained a strong basis for teaching medicine for several centuries in the West and in the Islamic East until about the seventeenth century.<sup>719</sup>

Ibn Sīnā also produced works containing mystical elements and Islamic wisdom in Eastern form. Among these are, *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān*, *The Bird*, *On Love*, *On Prayer*, *Ode on the Soul*, *On Fate*, and the *Oriental Philosophy*.<sup>720</sup> Among these books *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān*<sup>721</sup> represents the essence of Ibn Sīnā's view on philosophy. In this book

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718 - Ibrāhīm b. 'Alī b. Yūsuf al-Fayrūzābādī al-Shīrāzī, a great scholar. He was born in Fayrūzābād in Persia and studied in Shīrāz. He went to Baṣra then to Baghdad in the year 1037. He was one of great muftīs of his day. Among his books are: *al-Tanbīh*, *al-Muhadhdhab*, *al-Tabṣīrah*, *al-Lumma*', *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā*'.

719 - Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 168.

720 - Fakhry, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 133.

721 - Ibn Sīnā also wrote a book by the same title *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*. However the figure of *Ḥayy* in the Ibn Sīnā writing represents the Superhuman Spirit while Ibn Tufayl's *Ḥayy* represents personification of the neutral Spirit of Mankind which has been accordance with the Divine reality. (*The History of Philosophy* by Dr T. J. De Boer, p. 185, 186).



Ḥayy as an old man represents the wisdom of philosophers which is the guide for individual thinking soul.<sup>722</sup>

-Philosophy: Ibn Sīnā's philosophy is more complete and comprehensive than system of Kind and Fārābī. However, some claim that Ibn Sīnā's greatness is due not to his originality but his lucid and systematic style.<sup>723</sup> Ibn Sīnā knew how to group already existing material which came from his ancestors, and presented them in an intelligible form.<sup>724</sup>

Ibn Sīnā insisted that the idea of this world being created from nothing was erroneous. According to him nothing could come into being unless it had not been previously, and the action of the agent (God) upon the world would, on this assumption, cease as soon as the world came into being.<sup>725</sup> It follows that God is the necessary being, whilst all other beings are only possible. Furthermore, neither the Necessary Being nor its action can be an object of discursive thought, since it is without cause, quality, position, or time. Although all things emanate from God, they do not share with Him anything.<sup>726</sup>

Since Aristotle's idea about God was opposite to the Qur'anic view of an omniscient and omnipresent God. For this reason Ibn Sīnā found a harmony between Aristotle's ideas and the Qur'anic verses. According to Ibn Sīnā the necessary being knows everything through self-apprehension because everything had emanated from it.

God caused a series of emanations without any intermediary being. The initial emanation from this act was the First Intellect which moved the outermost heavenly sphere. This then apprehends itself in so far as it is contingent in itself, and so far as, through its author, it is necessary. In apprehending itself as contingent in itself,

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722 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 147, 148.

723 - Fakhry, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 128.

724 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 133

725 - Fakhry, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 147.

726 - *Ibid.*, p. 150.

it generates the Second Intellectual substance in the series. This process is then repeated until to the emanation of the Tenth Intellect, which concludes the series and dominates the nethermost sphere, namely, that of the sublunary world in which we live.<sup>727</sup>

Ibn Sīnā, like Kant, claimed that categories for knowing things do not belong to the phenomenal world and so are subject to logic not science. For Ibn Sīnā the categories are under the subjective order of our intelligence to perceive the sublunary world. The important contribution of Ibn Sīnā was in providing ideas on the definition and recognition of the material world. According to Ibn Sīnā, every material object in this world has four causes which are material, formal, efficient and final. Ibn Sīnā maintained that these four elements may all appear together in a definition of the object. For instance, he maintained that a knife may be defined as an iron implement, of such and such a shape, made by the iron for cutting bread, to eat.<sup>728</sup>

**Mind and Soul:** According to Ibn Sīnā there were three kinds of minds: the vegetable mind, the animal mind and the human mind characterised by reason. The vegetable mind has three powers: the first is nutritive power which when resident in the body changes another body into the form of the first. The second is the power of growth, the body itself continues to increase without changing its form till it attains full maturity. The third power is the power of reproduction, which draws from the body a part similar to itself in potentiality, capable of producing other bodies similar to it in actuality.<sup>729</sup>

The animal mind has two kinds of faculties: The first is the motive faculty which includes operative powers and efficient powers. The second is the perceptive faculty which is further subdivided into external and internal. The external power contains five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The internal power is the

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727 - Ibid., p. 156.

728 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 70.

729 - Ibid., pp. 70, 71.



mediator between the five senses and the higher thinking faculties.<sup>730</sup> Therefore five external senses correspond to the five internal senses which are the co-ordination sense, memory of the collected sense-images, unconscious apperception, conscious apperception, and memory of the higher apperception.<sup>731</sup>

The human mind, according to Ibn Sīnā contains only one different element from the animal mind, called 'reason'. Reason has two powers: practical reason or active intelligence which is what morality depends upon, and theoretical reason or speculative intelligence which is what enables us to have abstract thought.<sup>732</sup>

Logic: Ibn Sīnā's theory of logic is based on the model of Fārābī's commentaries on Aristotle's Organon. For example, Ibn Sīnā, in his book '*al-Najāt*', starts by giving a definition of logic that contained Aristotelian, Neoplatonist as well as Stoic elements. His other major ideas on logic can be found in the books '*al-Ishārāt*' and, the *Classification of Sciences*. In *Classification of Sciences*, Ibn Sīnā divided the science of logic into nine parts which resemble Porphyry's *Isagoge*. These parts deal with the following concepts:

1. A general logic, as a kind of philosophy of language,
2. Simple and abstract elements of logic (*māqūlāt*) which Aristotle called Categories.
3. The combination of simple ideas in order to form the propositions (*al-'Ibāra or al-Tafsīr*).
4. The propositions in different forms of syllogism (*qiyās*).
5. The conditions to be fulfilled by the premises from which the subsequent chain of reasoning proceeds (*burhān*),
6. The nature and limitations of probable reasoning (*jaḍal*).
7. The fallacies of logical reasoning (*maghālīṭ*),

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730 - Ibid., p. 71.

731 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 141.

732 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 71.

8. The description of the art of persuasion through oratorical devices (*khaṭābah*) known *rhetoric*.<sup>733</sup>
9. The fine art of stirring the soul and imagination of the audience through the magic of words is termed *poetica* (*shi'r*).

Ibn Sīnā divided the science of metaphysics into three main parts: The first theology, which is concerned with the ultimate cause of being or science of God. The second ontology, which is concerned with the fundamental attributes or determinations of being. - The third science, the metaphysical foundations of knowledge concerned with the fundamental principles of other particular sciences.<sup>734</sup>

#### D- IBN RUSHD (1126-1198):

After the fall of the Umayyads dynasty in Syria in 750, Abdurrahmān Ibn Mu'āwiya moved to Spain, where he was promoted to the position of Emir of Cordoba and Andalus. The State was established which for 250 years promoted progressive intellectual inquiry. Muslims, Jews and Christians lived in harmony and the scholars from these three religions produced a native philosophical and scientific milieu in this part of the Muslim World. In Spain, Muslim thinkers wrote on music, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, Sufism, and jurisprudence. Among these thinkers were Ibn Bājja,<sup>735</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl<sup>736</sup> and Ibn Rushd, who should be regarded as great philosophers of their time.<sup>737</sup>

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733 - Ibid., p. 68.

734 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 150.

735 - There is nothing known of the life of the Ibn Bājja. Only that he in 1118 was in Saragossa where he wrote his several works. The other anecdote is that he was appointed Almoravid court in Fez and where he died in year 1138. Like Fārābī he was little given to systematising. Although his metaphysical and physical theories agree generally the view of Fārābī on the logical ground he departs from his master.

736 - We know about Ibn Ṭufayl that he was born Gaudix, a small town and he died in Morocco in the year 1185. He became the vizier and physician to Abu Ya'qūb (1163- 1184) the second Caliph. In his writing like Ibn Sīnā, he tried to combine Greek science and Oriental wisdom. In his book



Abū 'l-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn Rushd, known in Europe as Averroes, was one of the greatest intellectual geniuses phenomena in the History of Muslim Philosophy and indeed philosophy in general. Ibn Rushd was the purest Aristotelian amongst the Muslim philosophers due to his access to the authentic Aristotelian texts and was destined to interpret Aristotle as no one before him had done.<sup>738</sup> In addition he was acquainted with all of the sciences of his time and became an authority on religious law (jurisprudence), philosophy, astronomy and medicine. Under Ibn Rushd the development of philosophy amongst the Muslims reached its summit.

**-Life and writing:** Ibn Rushd was born in Cordoba in Spain in 1126, descended of a famous family of judges and jurist scholars.<sup>739</sup> His grandfather was the cardinal judge (*qādī al-quḍāt*) in Cordova and the foremost authority in Mālikī jurisprudence and was invested with the dignity of being a supreme judge. Ibn Rushd first began to study by memorising the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* especially that of Imām Mālik's *Muwaḥḥa*'. He then undertook to study language, Islamic law (jurisprudence), mathematics, linguistics, astronomy, and theology.<sup>740</sup>

During Ibn Rushd's early association with Ibn Zuhr his medical talents came to the fore and he wrote a medical book under the title of *al-Kulliyāt*.<sup>741</sup> His two chief philosophical influences were Ibn Bājja (d. 1139), known as Avempace in the west, and Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 1186). Author of the famous allegory *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, Ibn

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Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān he compared two islands, on one of which there are a human society, and on the other an individual man called Ḥayy. In this second island Ḥayy himself progressed a natural philosophy. Later on he met with Absal who had a religion and culture. When Ḥayy learnt the language of Absal, understood that religious and philosophical truths are one and the same. In this book Ḥayy represent humanity outside of revelation such as Indian, Persian and Greek wisdom. (De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 182- 184).

737 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, pp. 172- 174.

738 - *Ibid.*, p. 187.

739 - Nasr, *Science and Civilisation in Islam*, p. 53, 54.

740 - Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 242.

741 - *Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions*, by Rosemary Goring, p. 48.

Ṭufayl introduced him to the Almohad prince Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf, after which he was appointed judge of Seville (Ishbiliya) in 1171 and then in Cordoba. Ibn Rushd's scope of knowledge led to his appointment as a cardinal judge. He spent most of his life as a judge (*qādī*) successively in Cordoba, Seville and for a short time in Morocco. During this period of his life Ibn Rushd wrote books on jurisprudence and medicine as well as commentaries on Aristotle's works. The caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf ordered him to write an exposition of Aristotle's works. Following the death of Ibn Ṭufayl in 1182, Ibn Rushd became the caliph's court physician.<sup>742</sup>

After the death of the Caliph Abū Ya'qūb and the accession of his son Abū Yūsuf al-Manṣūr in 1184, Ibn Rushd's position did not change. However, ten years later he was put under house arrest by the order of Caliph in Alisana (Lucena), a small town near Cordova.<sup>743</sup> Some time after this, many of his works were burnt at the Caliph's order. At the same time the caliph had issued a prohibition against the study of philosophy. However, shortly after, for unknown reasons, Ibn Rushd was restored to favour with the Caliph, and he resumed his study of philosophy.<sup>744</sup> In 1198 he died in Morocco at the age of seventy two.<sup>745</sup>

Two important characteristics of Ibn Rushd set his work apart from that of Muslim Aristotelians such as Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. These related to his commentaries on the books of Aristotle and his attempt to demonstrate the essential harmony between philosophy and the religious dogma. Perhaps a third distinctive characteristic of Ibn Rushd was the fact that, at the time, he was the first Muslim philosopher who had written on jurisprudence and become a judge.<sup>746</sup> His book entitled *The Reference for the Searcher and the Resort for the fair (Bidāya al-Mujtahid wa Nihāya al-Muqtasid)* is still taught to students of jurisprudence in several universities to this day. Although he was a Mālikī and his official judging system was built on the

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742 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, pp. 171-172.

743 - Corbin, History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 243.

744 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 172.

745 - De Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 188

746 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 172.



basis of that school, he did not hesitate to use ideas and inspiration from the other sects.<sup>747</sup>

In his most original and famous work, *Incoherence of the Incoherence (Tahāfut al-Tahāfut)*, he tried to defend philosophy against its great adversary, Ghazālī, and remove some of the Neoplatonist elements that had crept into the body of Aristotelian exegesis by Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. Because of this Ibn Rushd attacked both Ibn Sīnā and Ghazālī. He claimed that both Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā had misunderstood the corpus of Aristotle. These views are reflected in a certain works including *Inquiry into Problems Discussed in Ibn Sīnā's Metaphysics of al-Shifā* and *The Divergence of Fārābī's Approach to Logic from that of Aristotle*.<sup>748</sup> Whilst his considerable works, translated into Latin, had an affect on Western writers, unfortunately he had little influence in the Muslim World due to his geographical distance and the opposition to Ghazālī.

Ibn Rushd's numerous commentaries on the Corpus of Aristotle amount to some thirty-eight books including *Metaphysics, Physics, Analytica, De Caelo* and *De Anima*.<sup>749</sup> Most of his commentaries have been lost in the original Arabic but preserved either in Hebrew or Latin translations.<sup>750</sup> For this reason St. Thomas referred to him as "the Commentator". Some accounts also held that Ibn Rushd wrote a commentary of Plato's *Republic* and Porphyry's *Isagoge* as well.<sup>751</sup>

Altogether, fifteen of the thirty-eight commentaries of Averroes were translated into Latin directly from the Arabic during the thirteenth century. This is why he greatly influenced later Jewish and Christian writers.<sup>752</sup> For instance, between the years of 1217 and 1256, the commentaries of Ibn Rushd, including: *De Caelo et Mundo, De*

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747 - Fountain, (Popular Educational and Scientific Magazine), Jan-Mar., London, 1996 vol. 2 No: 13, p.7.

748 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 275-276.

749 - Nasr, Science and civilisation in Islam, p. 54.

750 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 131.

751 - A Dictionary of Philosophy, Edited by Antony Flew, p. 33.

752 - The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Cyril Glassé, p. 174.

*Anima, De Generations et Corruptions, Physicia, Metaphysica, Poetica and Ethica Nicomachaea*, were translated into Latin by Michael the Scot.

-Philosophy: According to Ibn Rushd, philosophy must agree with Islam. Ibn Rushd further believed that whilst studying only a little philosophy might incline a person towards atheism, a deeper study would provide a better understanding of religion. He claimed that there were two kinds of revelation: the philosophical/ scientific and the religious, which must concur in the final analysis.

Ibn Rushd drew support for his ideas directly from the Qur'ān. He believed that the Book of God is quite clear in stating that "...In it (the Qur'ān) are Verses that are entirely clear (*muḥkamāt*), they are the foundation of the book; and others not entirely clear (*mutashābihāt*)... but none knows its hidden meanings (*ta'wīl*) save Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in it; the whole of it are from our Lord." And none receive admonition except men of understanding."<sup>753</sup> Ibn Rushd felt that in this verse "men of understanding" referred to the philosophers.<sup>754</sup>

He also believed that although some statements within the Qur'ān can be interpreted in an allegorical sense, others clearly can not, such verses would need to be looked at from a philosophical point of view. For example, the statement that "God is in heaven" in its literal sense would mean that He is a physical entity in space, whilst a philosophical interpretation of the verse might conclude that God is exalted above all that is. Thus, according to Ibn Rushd a philosopher must prefer to interpret this statement as "Heaven is in God."<sup>755</sup>

It is important to remember that Ibn Rushd's priorities in life were firstly to be a pious Muslim and only secondly to be a philosopher. For him, philosophy should not be the aim of a Muslim thinker, but rather used for the interpretation of Islam. This is why he regarded Aristotle to be the best representative of philosophy and

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753 - The Qur'ān, 3: 7.

754 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 278.

755 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 137.



tried to reconcile his views with Islamic dogmas. According to Ibn Rushd religion does not negate reason as conceived in philosophy, but theologians have tended to see religion as a special type of knowledge. Religion in Ibn Rushd's understanding is not a knowledge, but obedience or moral practice is the aim of God, who knows that human welfare can only be realised in society.<sup>756</sup>

As regards the eternity of the world, Ibn Rushd believed, like his master Aristotle, that the world was eternal and that there can be no creation from nothing. However, he divided eternity into two parts. The first, the eternity of God, exists without cause as God is not in need of time. The world on the other hand was eternally present in the creators mind but exists with cause and for this reason a creative and moving agent is eternally working upon this kind of eternal existence.<sup>757</sup>

The second corner stone of Ibn Rushd's ideas was his creed based on the knowledge of God, or God's relationship with His creatures. According to him if we accept that God knows everything individually then we can not retain a recognition of Him as a multiple existence. Thus we should accept that God apprehends everything by knowing His own being only and nothing besides, otherwise His omniscience will become doubtful. Ibn Rushd also claimed that God's knowledge cannot be the same as that of human, because our knowledge is derived from things, whilst in contrast things are derived from God. He claimed that in fact God's knowledge can be called neither particular nor universal because this distinction can be accepted only by the human mind and cannot apply to God.<sup>758</sup>

The third important element in Ibn Rushd's ideas concern the immortality of the human soul. Some theologians suppose that Ibn Rushd denied personal immortality of the soul. In fact this is based on a misunderstanding of the difference between the concepts of intellect and soul. According to Ibn Rushd the intellect is a faculty of the brain which comes from the First Intellect of the universe, and by this faculty men come to know the eternal truths and fundamental laws of thought as

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756 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 191.

757 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 133.

758 - *Ibid.* p. 134.

well as the axioms of mathematics without the sense-organs. Although, according to Ibn Rushd, the human intellect in this world suffers separation from the active intellect after death again returns to this active intellect, and thus it will live there in eternity along with other intellects. Therefore, it can be seen that Ibn Rushd did not propagate the idea of immortality of soul, but only an immortality of the intellect.

For Ibn Rushd the driving force which sustains life and effects the growth of our organic bodies is the soul, a kind of energy which gives life to matter. Although the human soul in the world view of Ibn Rushd is closely associated with the body, it can also be considered apart from the body, as for example form is contrasted to matter.

Ibn Rushd reached the conclusion that the soul does not die, but being independent of the body may continue to exist after the death of the body in an individual capacity. In addition to this Ibn Rushd even claimed that in the next world the soul will be draped with a body that will be little different from the worldly one.<sup>759</sup>

Other important ideas of Ibn Rushd stem from his criticism of Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā. He criticised the ideas of Ghazālī as well as the Ash'arītes in particularly in relation to the Divine attributes of God. According to Ibn Rushd Ghazālī had misunderstood the ideas of Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā on the attributes and knowledge of God. He claimed that they did not deny the Divine attributes of perfection which include knowledge, will, life, power, speech, hearing, and seeing, but simply tried to show that God has different attributes from humans.

Ibn Rushd also attacked Ghazālī and the Ash'ariyya for denying the necessity of the causal nexus. Ibn Rushd points out that the main aim of both the Ash'ariyya and Ghazālī was to reserve to God the exclusive prerogatives of sovereignty and efficacy in the world. For this reason Ghazālī took the extreme view that the sense experience does not reveal the causal system and therefore it is a mistake to equate temporal conjunction with necessary causal determination. Thus there is nothing to prevent such Divinely ordained sequences from being broken whenever God so

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759 - Ibid. pp. 135-136.



desires. Ibn Rushd disagreed and felt that a belief in the causal nexus would not compromise the notion of God's sovereignty.

On the question of matter and form Ibn Rushd claimed that the two can only be separate in thought. All movement is the transition from potentiality to actuality and from actuality back to potentiality.<sup>760</sup>

### Conclusion:

Muslim philosophers, especially the Peripatetics, al-Kindī, Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, did not have access to the authentic works of Aristotle and Plato without a few exceptions. In contrast to this the Muslim Peripatetics (*Mashshā'i*) philosophers spent most of their energy for several centuries trying to reconcile the contradictions between real and apocryphal books which were attributed mainly to Aristotle. In fact most of these books were a mixture of Platonic and Aristotelian elements commented upon by early Neoplatonist authors such as Alexander of Aphrodisias.

Nevertheless, Muslim philosophers studied these apocryphal texts and were able to reach their own separate philosophical solutions and results in different areas of philosophy. Muslim philosophers basically established most of the premises from religion and then applied philosophical methods. Therefore they reached an independent world view from Greek philosophers.

This kind of intellectual struggle represents native Islamic wisdom rather than pure philosophy. In particular, Ibn Sīnā illuminated Eastern wisdom (*ḥikma*) and as a result of this understanding Islamic philosophy gradually gained wisdom character and became more closer to the gnosticism and Sufism. The Brethren of Purity emerged between philosophy and Sufism as a kind of representative of Eastern wisdom literature.

Ibn Rushd's criticism of Ibn Sīnā left some original ideas that single him out from the other Muslim Aristotelians who lived before him. Ibn Rushd said that Muslim philosophers such as Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā had misunderstood the difference between Aristotle and Plato because they used the theory of emanation as the cornerstone of

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760 - De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 192.

Aristoteles and Plato's ideas. Thus he felt that both Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā had distorted Aristotle's own ideas. It is interesting to note that while Ghazālī charged these two with degenerating the Islamic faith with Neoplatonist ideas, Ibn Rushd attracted them because of they destroyed the real ideas of Aristotle and Plato.

Due to the strong opposition of Ghazālī, the study of philosophy decreased in the Muslim world. However, with Ibn Rushd in Spain and with Suhrawardī in Shī'i Persia it found new land in which to spread. In Iran in particular, Suhrawardī's theory of Illumination lasted for a long period, with this mystical movement having an affect on many of the processes of sufi training. It is generally accepted that outside of these two notable places, Muslim philosophy and wisdom gradually stagnated in the Sunni world. Because of this little attention has been paid to rich post-Ibn Rushd and Suhrawardī philosophies. In fact Islamic philosophy never died and is still alive in its wisdom form as a deep understanding and way of life.



## CHAPTER IX

### WISDOM IN ISLAMIC MYSTICISM (SUFISM)

#### Introduction

Although, some Muslims limited Islam to the most outward interpretation of the *Sharī'a*, and rejected its whole intellectual and inner dimensions,<sup>761</sup> indeed Islam itself comprises both an esoteric and exterior aspect in its unique nature. While the external aspects of Islam are represented by Islamic law (*Sharī'a*), the internal aspect is represented by Islamic mysticism (Sufism), as a spiritual dimension of Islam. By the development and spread of sufi orders through out all the Muslim world, Sufism has become one of the most important faces of the Islamic way of life.

By following the Prophet and companions one can find both the exterior (*Sharī'a*) and esoteric (*ma'rifa*) practices of Islam. However, after the death of the Prophet, the result of luxury, political uncertainty and non-dynamic law, as well as pure rationalistic theological discussions, separated these unique religious practice into two paths, known as *Sharī'a* and *Tarīqa*. The sufi way of life, named as *ṭarīqa* means 'way', or 'training method' mostly distinguish from the Islamic sacred law *Sharī'a*, and this difference has remained until present day. Although sometimes these two faces of Islam were united in a single system, such as the synthesis of *Ghazālī*, each of them has its own teaching methods, terminology and perspectives. However, there have been many pious jurists authorities (*fuqahā'*) who have recognised the integrity and independence of the masters of the sufis.<sup>762</sup> For instance, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya (1292-1350) and Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328) quite opposed the philosophical Sufism, but they respected *Ghazālī* and some other great sufis, since these sufis developed their mystical ideas firmly on the base of the Qur'ān and Sunna. Yet, such orthodox scholars acted especially against the theory

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761 - Stoddart, Sufism, p. 3.

762 - Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, Ibn 'Aṭā'illah's Sufi Aphorisms (Kitāb al-Ḥikam), Translated by Victor Danner, p. xi- xiii.

“unity of existence”, (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) of Ibn ‘Arabī because of its dominant philosophical character.<sup>763</sup>

#### A- DEFINITION:

Although there are many different opinions on the origin of the word ‘*ṣūfī*’, the majority of lexicographers accepted that the term ‘*ṣūfī*’ was a derivative of the Arabic word ‘*ṣūf*’, meaning ‘wool’.<sup>764</sup> Therefore, those people who wore the woollen robe (*labas al-ṣūf*), were called ‘sufis’.<sup>765</sup> In this context, it is interesting to note that the woollen cloth was a characteristic of the early Islamic ascetics, who preferred its symbolic simplicity,<sup>766</sup> as a manifestation against pomp and luxury.

The term ‘*ṣūfī*’ for the first time was used by Jābir b. Ḥayyān (c. 721-815), in the second half of the eighth century. However, within two centuries the term ‘*ṣūfī*’ was applied to the whole body of Muslim mystics as a distinctive name.<sup>767</sup> The other term ‘*taṣawwuf*’, which represents the sufi philosophies in general as the Science of the Heart,<sup>768</sup> comes from the origin ‘*taṣawwafa*’ which literally means “he who is clothed in woollen dress”.<sup>769</sup> Therefore, Sufism contains in it the single concept both of a doctrine and a practical meaning.<sup>770</sup>

First of all, Sufism came to do battle against the increasing luxury and pomp, that had crept into the Islamic society, around the second century after the Prophet Muḥammad died. Secondly, Sufism also became an opponent of extreme interpretations of legal orthodox Islamic law on the one hand, and absolute rationalist thinking about theology on the other. To do so the classical sufi training,

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763 - Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, H. A. R. Gibb, and J. H. Kramers Leiden, Brill, E. J, p. 581.

764 - Stoddart, Sufism, p. 21.

765 - Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, H. A. R. Gibb, and J. H. Kramers Leiden, Brill, E. J, p. 579.

766 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 71.

767 - Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, H. A. R. Gibb, and J. H. Kramers Leiden, Brill, E. J, p. 580.

768 - A Popular Dictionary of Islam, by Ian Richard Netton, p. 246.

769 - Valuidin, The Kur’anic Sufism, p. 1, 2.

770 - Stoddart, Sufism, p. 21.



consisted of three stages: Islamic law (*Sharī'a*), sufi order (*ṭarīqa*), and the truth (*ḥaqīqa*), that is the ultimate stage of humanity's awareness, to which all sufis aspire. From this point of view, Sufism can be seen to be between the Divine law and the Divine Truth, providing a method for the unification of the two stages. For instance, according to Muḥammad Iqbāl, "Sufism is a necessary product of the play of various intellectual and moral forces, which would necessarily awaken the slumbering soul to a higher ideal of life."<sup>771</sup>

## B- SOURCES:

There are two different ideas on the sources of Sufism, which are opposed to each other. The first group claims that Sufism is the natural result of Islamic way of life while other group claimed that Sufism developed as a result of influences from external sources such as Neoplatonism, Christian mysticism, and pre-Islamic eastern teachings, such as the Indian and Persian religious cultures. In fact it is difficult to deny that some of the mystical elements of Sufism, had been transmitted from gnosticism,<sup>772</sup> ancient mystical writings, Buddhism and Hellenistic philosophy, especially from Neoplatonism.<sup>773</sup> Besides this, the Indian and Persian asceticism were also thought to have had some influences on the development of Sufism through the pantheistic tendencies of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d.c. 874) and al-Hallāj (857-922).<sup>774</sup>

The other considerable effect on the theoretical understanding of sufis, came through the writing and propagation of Ibn 'Arabī as the philosophical

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771 - Iqbāl, *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. xii.

772 - A system of belief that flourished in 4th century Christianity that they, rather than orthodox Christianity, these group held the real truth through by Christ about cosmic origins and the true destiny of the spirit within people, and that they alone would attain full salvation. At the same time they were considered heretics by the early Church Fathers, particularly for its appeal to secret traditions, its deprecatory view of the Creator God, and Christ. (See *Dictionary of Belief and Religion*, Edited by Rosemary Goring, p. 192)

773 - *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edited by James Hastings, and T. & T Clark, vol. 12, p. 11.

774 - *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8, p. 41.

manifestation in which philosophy theology and Sufism, were combined on the base of the theory of “Unity of existence” (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). Some scholars accepted that this theory also represented many external elements which were taken by many sufi orders as the theoretical foundation for their training traditions.<sup>775</sup>

The first group of scholars contrary to the above idea, claimed that although Christianity, Neoplatonism, Persian and Indian religions, played an important role in its development, in fact the very starting point of Sufism was derived from the inner dimension of Islam. For instant, Netton indicates neatly that “...the basic source and origin in Islam of knowledge, all intellectual inquiry, the use of reason and, by extension, *falsafa* itself, lies in the Qur’ān, so too it may equally well be argued that the primary motors of *taṣawwuf* are Qur’ānic.”<sup>776</sup> They argued also that the Qur’ān in many of its verses remind an inner relationship with God. In one of the chapters of the Qur’ān entitled *al-shuarā*, (The Poets) states that “...those who believe and do righteous deeds, and remember God much...”<sup>777</sup>. Other similar verse is, “Those who remember God standing, sitting and lying down on their sides,...”<sup>778</sup>, “...and praising of (you by) Allah is greater indeed.”<sup>779</sup> -<sup>780</sup>

Indeed, the parallel meanings to such verses which are the fundamental basis of Sufism, can be found also in the traditions of the Prophet concerning the mystical aspects and spiritual instruction method which are practised by the Prophet himself. According to this second group, the first sufi tendencies were derived chiefly from the teachings of the Qur’ān and the traditions of the Prophet. They also argued that since in the eyes of sufis, Islamic law (*Sharī‘a*) is the vehicle of the *ḥaqīqa*, the first

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775 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion, vol. 14, p. 115, 116.

776 - Netton, Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the Hose of Islam, p. 48.

777 - Qur’ān, 26: 227.

778 - Ibid., 3: 191.

779 - Ibid., 29: 45.

780 - Stoddart, Sufism, p.27, 43.



sufis were always amongst the most ardent defenders of the outward law, the *Sharī'a* as the foundation ground of Sufism.<sup>781</sup>

A part from the above two ideas we can justify a middle way that assimilation of foreign ideas into Sufism would not have been possible if some concepts of Islam had not already existed in the Qur'ān and Sunna. Among these concepts such as fear of God (*taqwa*), piety (*ikhlaṣ*),<sup>782</sup> wisdom (*ḥikma*), inner knowledge (*ma'rifa*)<sup>783</sup>, are the most essential for the purposes of sufis. For this reason, it is generally accepted that to be a sufi requires two essential conditions; adherence to the faith and law of Islam (*Sharī'a*), and the practice of virtues. Therefore, in an immediate sense, there is no Sufism without Islam, or one cannot be a sufi without being a practising Muslim.<sup>784</sup>

### C- SUFI TRAINING METHODS:

In order to reach the spiritual or essential reality (*ḥaqīqa*) and friendship of God (*waliullāh*), every sufi must pass through three educational phases, known as purification (*maqāmāt*), the way of love (*maḥabba*), and wisdom or mental illumination (*ma'rifa*). However, according to some pantheistic sufis, such as Ḥallāj<sup>785</sup>, at the end of the above process, the sufis soul becomes unified with God. The first step of this systematic spiritual training, is to teach the absolute unity and attributes of God. Whilst within classical Islamic thought, the Creator and the

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781 - Ibid., p. 41.

782 - Ikhlaṣ is pre-eminently an interior virtue of the faithful Muslim. In the Qur'ānic use of the term ikhlaṣ means to honour and serve God exclusively (Qur'ān, 2: 139). The opposites of Ikhlaṣ are nifāq 'hypocrisy' and shirk, associating others with God.

783 - This concept will be examined in the second part of this chapter as a separate title as the wisdom of Sufism.

784 - Stoddart, Sufism, p. 19, 56.

785 - Mystic theologian of Persian origin. He led a fervently ascetic life. He travelled far and wide in the Islamic world and made the pilgrimage to Mecca three times. Since he proclaimed "I am the Truth (God)" he was imprisoned in Baghdad for nine years and finally was executed.

created are different from each other, the view point held by Pantheist sufis is that God and his creatures are both the same.<sup>786</sup>

A further step in the spiritual training of sufis, was the perfection of the heart (*qalb*). The heart was seen as a mirror for the reflection of the Divine Will. Thus, a sufi should keep his heart pure, and free from worldly and materialistic love. The sufis, also sought perfection through listening to the advice of the soul, rather than the body. In this, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (1207-1273) expresses that the eyes of the spirit are more important than those of the body, and that the heavenly model is more important than the earthly life.<sup>787</sup>

The sufis then believed that the soul had an affect on the body, but was bound by neither time nor space. The soul has a relationship with the body, but this is of constant opposition. The soul always wishes to return to its origin through union with the Divine Soul. The other point is that the human soul is potentially good, but its weakness come from its relationship with the material world, and the human body. Thus, in order to reach the higher spiritual realm, sufis must be instructed under the supervision of the sufi masters (*murshids*), and commit themselves to seeking mystical experience, thereby embracing the love of God and the purification of the heart.

#### D- ORDERS:

To reach the sufi goal and to apply the training method, every sufi order followed one particular master as a guide, called *shaykh* or *murshid*. Around the tenth century, sufi orders divided into a number of branches, each following their own founder, spiritual masters and training methods. Later on, this training became connected with the Prophet Muḥammad, both through his cousin and son-in-law, ‘Alī b. Abū Ṭālib (598-661), and the Prophet’s closest companion, the first caliph Abū Bakr (c. 750-634)<sup>788</sup>. Among all those sufis, only Uwaysīs<sup>789</sup> had no visible

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786 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 246.

787 - The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, Cyril Glassé, p. 205.

788 - One of the earliest converts to Islam and the first Muslim caliph.



guide (*murshid*) to be connected with the Prophet, Muḥammad, because Uways al-Qarānī<sup>790</sup> only after the death of the Prophet went to the Ḥijāz, and he was not among the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad. However, it is interesting here to note that some sufis, such as the famous Iranian sufi Abū al-Ḥasan Kharraqānī (1034), rejected the concept of following a single master as a guide (*murshid*). He stated: "I am amazed at those disciples who declare that they require this or that master. You are perfectly well aware that I have never been taught by any man. God was my guide, though I have the greatest respect for all the masters."<sup>791</sup>

Although celibacy was permitted by some orders, the majority of them did not approve of it. The disciples (*murīd*) have to know that they will undergo spiritual training by serving God, and obeying the order of their master (*shaykh*). Both men and women were admitted into the order. Sometimes the *murīd* had to live in a sufi trying house (*tekke*) for a number of years, observing the rules of the orders, thereby purifying his soul. Although some one hundred sufi orders still exist today throughout the Islamic world, Qādirīya, Naqshbandiya, Sanūsīs, Shādhilīya, Mawlavīya, Suhrawardīya, Rifā'īya, Aḥmadīya are well known sufi orders.<sup>792</sup>

## E- HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Schimmel clearly stressed that: "Sufism traces its origins back to the Prophet of Islam and takes inspiration from the divine word as revealed through him in the Qur'ān... For everything concerning worldly and spiritually affairs can be found in this book, and its interpretation in different ages shows how the self-

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789 - A sufi ṭarīqa owed this name to a pious ascetic of Yemen Uways al-Qarānī.

790 - Uways al-Qarānī, a contemporary of the Prophet, who knew the Prophet without ever having seen him in his lifetime. He died in the civil war Ṣiffīn (657) and become one of the first martyrs of Shī'a. Since, he loved the Prophet too much, after he died in Yamen one of the mystical figure and they attributed him a sufi order called Uwaysīs.

791 - 'Arabī, Futuhat-i Mekkiyya, p. 33.

792 - The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World, Oxford university Press, vol. 4, p. 117.

understanding of the Muslim community grew and changed.”<sup>793</sup> In general, throughout all history of Islamic thought, Sufism can be divided into three periods: the early mystical tendencies, pantheistic Sufism and systematic Sufism. Each of this period was defined by its prevailing conditions and attributes: Let us examine these period of development in a chronological order.

### 1- The early Sufi Tendencies:

Well before the introduction of pantheistic speculation amongst the Muslims we can find some aspects of an ascetic life exhibited by the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad, and indeed by the Prophet himself. We know from the historical narration that companions such as, Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī (d. 652), Salmān al Fārisī, Hudhayfa (d. 657), ‘Ammar b. Yāsir and Mu‘ādh b. Jabal and some others were homeless people, who lived in the mosque of the Prophet an ascetic and basic life that was devoted to Islam. Abū Dhar al-Ghifārī and Hudhayfa in particular, chose the hard ascetic life, at a time when many others had chosen the softer life of the world, following the death of the Prophet.<sup>794</sup>

‘Alī b. ‘Abū Ṭālib and ‘Abū Bakr were also important figures of the first sufi orders, to the extent that many sufi movements accepted them as the second mystical masters after the prophet Muḥammad,<sup>795</sup> because of their humble life on the foot step of Prophet. However, until Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (642-728) there were not any organised ascetic groups nor special mystical practices, outside the individual ascetic way of life. But, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī beside played a central role in the development of systematic thinking on the sufi movements. Indeed, his concepts of reflection (*fikr*), self examination (*muḥāsaba*) and submission to God, were essential to the history of theology and mysticism.<sup>796</sup>

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793 - Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p.24-25.

794 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 235.

795 - Archer, *The Sufi Mystery*, p. 58.

796 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 235, 236.



Therefore, the first mystical movement gained swift progress at Baṣra, especially amongst the Persian and Indian community. The great female sufi of Islam, Rābi‘a al-‘Adawiyya (d. 801) was greatly influenced by the ideas of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. She is renowned for her adoption of the ascetic and celibate way of life, and was the first to uphold the concepts of “Divine love”, and the symbolism of love (*al-ḥubb*), which in the later medieval period of Sufism, were used by Ḥāfiẓ, ‘Umar Khayyām and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī in their own teachings of the symbolism of love and wine.

When the caliph al-Manṣūr founded Baghdad as the new centre of the Islamic state, the majority of sufi activity shifted there also, along with other intellectual and cultural activities. It was in this new cultural milieu, that the great Muslim sufis such as al-Muḥāsibi (d. 857) and al-Junayd al-Baghdadī had a strong affect on the late practical sufi movements. The mysticism of Muḥāsibi, consisted of two basic principles: self examination (*muḥāsaba*) and readiness to suffer (*ṣabr*).

Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd al-Baghdadī’s affect on the late sufi practice was to emphasise the concepts of ‘covenant’ (*mīthāq*), and the restoration of the soul (*fanā’* and *baqā’*). Although al-Baghdadī claimed that Sufism came to uphold the Qur’ān and the traditions of the Prophet, these concepts were an extremist interpretation of Divine union. Al-Junayd claimed that the body and soul of man, had pre-existed in the Divine mind before their actual creation. In other words, since humankind comes from God, always wants to unite again with God’s Eternal Essence.

From Junayd’s point of view, the human soul made a covenant (*mīthāq*) with God, to recognise and worship him.<sup>797</sup> The recognition of God’s unity (*tawḥīd*) can be known by the Divine law, but after that, the soul needs to be prescribed extra mystical exercises to reach Divine knowledge, and thus to be fully-satisfied. In this, al-Junayd was probably influenced by the ideas from Yogic mysticism

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797 - Qur’ān, 7: 171, “... and remember that which is therein (act on its commandments), so that you may fear God and obey Him.”

(*Wincka-ināna*)<sup>798</sup> or (*ifrād*). He claimed that the soul can be restored (*fanā*) to its original place, which is the Soul of God (*baqā*), by way of the sufi spiritual experience. Thus, it was for the first time, that Sufism felt the urge to be free from Islamic law (*Sharī'a*).<sup>799</sup>

During this period, there were two other notable sufis, Dhu al-Nūn al-Misrī (d. 859) and Ibrāhīm b. Adham (d.776) who were more representative of balanced mysticism. According to al-Misrī, the main goal of the sufis was fellowship with God, and the condition of this fellowship is love. The real love of God, implies the shutting out of all other emotions from the heart. At the same time al-Misrī claimed that the mystical path consisted of a series of stations (*maqāmāt*),<sup>800</sup> and a corresponding series of states (*aḥwāl*)<sup>801</sup> in which the mystic must live through, in order that God might favour him/her. The *maqāmāt* was earned through human endeavour, but the *aḥwāl* was given by God.<sup>802</sup>

In this period the sufi Ibrāhīm b. Adham concentrate on the concepts of piety and abstention. His philosophy held that if you wish to be the friend of God, or to be loved by Him, then you must renounce this world and the next. Do not desire either of them; empty yourself of those two worlds and turn your face towards God.

Sufi mysticism during this early period, can be seen as a kind of meditation on the some of the Qur'anic concepts such as "love of God" (*maḥabba*), 'renunciation' (*zuhd*)<sup>803</sup> and "remembrance of the other-worldly life" (*dhikr al ākhira*). At the

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798 - The isolation of the soul and the realisation of an eternal mode of being outside of time and space.

799 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 237.

800 - Literally, place, position, rank. In Sufism refers the progressive stations that the soul has to attain in the search for God.

801 - States, conditions. In Islamic Mysticism, a spiritual state; the actualisation of a divine 'encounter'.

802 - Fakhry, A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 240.

803 - Abstinence from sin and from what is superfluous, from all that estranges from God.



same time, early mystics also took most of reference from the traditions of the Prophet into their adherence.

## 2- Pantheistic Sufism: $\sigma$

It was during the second period of Sufism -in the ninth century- that the first pantheistic ideas began to emerge in theoretical writings. The two best known sufis: Abū Yazid al-Bisṭāmī (d. 874) and Al-Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (857-922) are the representatives of pantheistic sufism.

Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī's grandfather Surūshān, was a Zoroastrian convert to Islam. About Bisṭāmī's life is known little. He was born in Bisṭām, western Khorāsān, and was induced to follow the sufi *ṭarīqa* by Abū 'Alī al-Sindī. Besides being a sufi, al-Bisṭāmī was a theologian and a philosophical poet. He defined Sufism as neglecting comfort and accepting suffering. From this point of view, the main aim of a sufi was to humble himself, and be a lover of God.<sup>804</sup> Al-Bisṭāmī founded the concept of the 'extinction in unity' (*fanā' fi'l-tawḥīd*), which played a significant role in the late sufi movements.<sup>805</sup> This idea may have been derived from his master al-Sindī, who was an Indian convert to Islam. According to al-Bisṭāmī, it is the passing away of individual desires, and the neglecting of comfort which will not allow the sufi to reach a union with God.<sup>806</sup>

The other key figure of this second period, Al-Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj was born in al-Baydā to the east of the Persian Gulf, in 858. Al-Ḥallāj was taught by al-Makkī (d. 909), al-Tustarī (d. 986), al-Shiblī (d. 945)<sup>807</sup> and al-Junayd, who were some of the greatest figures in the history of Islam. Al-Junayd in particular was instrumental in influencing the ideas of al-Ḥallāj. Al-Ḥallāj studied philosophy and travelled widely in India, Khorāsān, and Turkistan, before finally going to Baghdad.

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804 - Archer. *The sufi Mystery*, p. 63, 64.

805 - Gerber, *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8, p. 41.

806 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*. p. 243.

807 - Sunni mystic of Baghdad (861-945). After the execution of his friend al-Ḥallāj in 922 he led an eccentric life. His tomb was venerated at Baghdad.

It was here that al-Ḥallāj made his infamous mystical statement, “I am the Truth” (*‘ana al-ḥaqq*), which was seen as heretical by the orthodox Muslims, and for which he was executed by the order of the Caliph at the age of sixty-four, in 922. Al-Ḥallāj proclaimed his belief in pantheism (Unity of Being) which was not in accordance with the traditional Islamic view point.

According pantheist sufis God is the real existence, both humanity and other creations are merely the reflection of this Ultimate Existence. For this reason, sufis put great emphasis upon learning the attributes of God. This was due to the fact that they considered God to be Supreme Beauty and Perfection. Thus, if a sufi wished to become perfect, he must imitate God and endeavour to become like God.

### 3- Systematic Sufism:

Under this title, three important figures of Muslim mystical philosophers, Ghazālī, Ibn ‘Arabī and Suhrawardī will be examined due to their teachings which were quite systematic, and they were widely recognised as the greatest theologians, philosophers, mystics and also religious figures of their time Islam and also today. In other words, these three unlike the other sufis, united Sufism, philosophy and theology in religious ground, as a full system.

For example, Ibn ‘Arabī’s theoretical doctrines not only transformed the rest of the concepts of doctrinal Sufism, but also penetrated into theology and theosophy or traditional philosophy (*ḥikma*), as a consistent sufi system.<sup>808</sup> Ghazālī combined Sufism, and Sharī‘a in a single system successfully. Suhrawardī also had considerable impact on both the philosophical ground and theoretical Sufism as a instruction method. Although I will not write here details of their ideas, I will focus only on their main creeds and understanding as an reflection of wisdom.

The result of this third development of Sufism, and the Islamic states’ strong support for sufi *ṭarīqa* influenced the popularisation of Sufism all over the Islamic world. For instance early rulers of Saljūqs, had built not only schools (*madāris*) for the study of the law, but also sufi training complexes (*khānqāhs*) for the sufi masters

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808 - Nasr, Living Sufism, p. 82.



and their disciples (*murīds*). Later the Ayyūbīds and the Mamluks, followed the example of Saljūqs and they did this to strengthen the bases of Sunni Islam against Shī'a. The masters had special titles used to address them in the court ceremony, or through correspondence. The sultans and their retinues visited them regularly to learn their advice and counsel; and the state provided the masters and their disciples with stipends, and imposing quarters in the sufi training complex (*khānqāhs*).<sup>809</sup>

#### a- Ghazālī (1058-1111):

The Persian authority Ghazālī was one of the most original and popular Muslim thinkers who has been widely recognised as the greatest theologian, jurist, philosopher, mystic and religious reformer (*mujaddīd*) of Islam. It was Ghazālī who attacked against the entire Aristotelian (*Mashshāi*) system of philosophy which was built up on the Neoplatonic foundation. It was also Ghazālī who, for the first time combined Sufism and the *Sharī'a* (law) through the use of philosophy in an attempt to end the fighting between the Muslim orthodoxy and the mystics.

-Life and Works: Ghazālī's life and works are so connected to each other that it would be easy to research them together. In his small but important book *Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl)* we can find both a development of his religious opinion and a defence of his ideas in a parallel process.

Ghazālī's long family name (*nisba*) is Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī but he came to be known as Ghazālī. He was born 1058 in Ṭūs in the country of Khorāsān near the modern city of Meshhed. Although Ghazālī was first influenced by his father, who was a pious sincere dervīsh, his regular education in Ṭūs really began after his father's death, when he studied jurisprudence (*fiqh*) before going to Jurjān to study with Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Ismā'īlī. However, Ghazālī's greatest master was al-Juwaynī, the popular Ash'arī theologian of that time, whom Ghazālī would stay with until his death in 1084. Thus Ghazālī soon became learned in *kalām*, philosophy and logic.<sup>810</sup>

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809 - Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, *Kitāb al-Ḥikam* ('Aṭā'illāh's Sufi Aphorisms), translated by Victor Danner, p.4.

810 - Sheikh, *Islamic Philosophy*, p. 217.

Amongst Ghazālī's other teachers at that time was the sufi scholar Abū 'Alī al-Fārmadhī (d. 1084), who had a profound affect on Ghazālī's mystical ideas. In 1085 Ghazālī went to the School of Nizām al-Mulk and became head of the Baghdad Nizāmiya school where he exercised great academic and political influence. However, in 1095 he suffered from some deep religious doubts and left Baghdad, abandoning his position there. Ghazālī then adopted the ascetic life and spent his time wandering and discussing his problem of truth with the philosophers, theologians and mystics.<sup>811</sup>

It was in this period that Ghazālī composed his greatest work *The Revival of the Religious Sciences (Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn)*. Ghazālī's book had the greatest impact on Muslim thought and even to this day remains a guide for the devout Muslim in every aspect of their religious life. This is also evident in the books division into four main subject areas: prayer (*'ibādāt*), social custom (*'adāt*), vices (*muhlikāt*) and virtues (*mundjiyāt*). During his travels, Ghazālī stayed a few years in Damascus and then journeyed to Jerusalem, Hebron, Madina and Mecca. In 1106, after eleven years he finally returned to teaching and became professor at Nishapūr where he died in 1111 at Tūs.<sup>812</sup>

Ghazālī in his formative years had been encouraged by al-Juwaynī to write some juristical books such as *Al-Baṣīṭ* and *Al-Wasīṭ*. However Ghazālī also wrote two well known books on Philosophy: *The Aims of Philosophers (Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa)* and *Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahāfut al-Falāsifa)*. Both these two which were translated into Latin in the thirteenth century under the title of *Destruction Philosophom*. On the other hand Ghazālī also wrote other two books about Aristotelian logic for Sunni jurists, (*Mi'yār al-'ilm*) and (*Miḥaqq al-naẓar*) in which he criticised the Aristotelian philosophers but also praised their use of logic and advocated its application in the religious sciences.<sup>813</sup>

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811 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 217, 218

812 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 2, p. 1038, 1039.

813 - The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. 2, p. 1040.



-Philosophy: From Ghazālī's point of view, philosophy was just an introduction to theology and other religious knowledge. In one of his main studies on philosophy *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa*, Ghazālī investigated the ideas of the philosophers without any criticism. In his other famous book on philosophy *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, Ghazālī was more critical especially towards Aristotelian Muslim philosophers such as Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, and used their own philosophical thought as a weapon to attack their ideas.

Ghazālī started to philosophise as a sceptic and used scepticism as a systematic method to establish a strong theological doctrine. He was constantly searching for certain knowledge which must be indubitable for him and whose objective would never be wrong or illusion. His starting point was the following question; who does not know that in dreams one perceives things which exist only in the mind of the dreamer, and who does not know that far-off trees look much smaller than their size and that a stick in water looks bent when it is not? and he added that who knows whether this world may not be a dream and the next world a reality and therefore whatever appears certain through senses or reason may be deceptive and illusory?<sup>814</sup>

Therefore, Ghazālī started to philosophise using the method of doubt, which later Descartes came to use in virtually the same form. Thus, Ghazālī's main aim was to find out an indubitable base for general knowledge. Whilst Ghazālī looked firstly for this essential knowledge in the senses, he understood that the senses sometimes deceive us, and for this reason sensory knowledge could not be relied upon. For instance, no eye can perceive the movement of a shadow, but still the shadow moves, or that a gold piece would cover any star, but a star is larger than the earth.

Ghazālī, secondly tended towards the use of reason but he could not find an invariable knowledge here, since reason is reliant upon sensory knowledge for investigation. In other words, neither science nor philosophy could satisfy Ghazālī, leading him to turn towards a third way, which was the mystical experiential path. In this respect he criticised the beliefs of certain philosophers as incompatible with Islamic belief such as the creation of the world from nothing, the reality of the

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814 - Qadir, Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World, p. 96.

Divine attributes and the resurrection of the body. Ghazālī felt the need to defend his religious dogmas against the pantheistic sufi movement, the Muslim Aristotelians and Bāṭinīs. Here I will concentrate only on his criticism of the Aristotelian Muslim Philosophers.

Ghazālī classified the philosophers generally into three categories: the Dahriyya (atheist, materialist) who reject the existence of God and argued for the eternity of the world; the *ṭabī'yūn* (deist, naturalist), who are not necessarily opposed to the existence of a creator, but who argue against the immortality of the soul; and the metaphysicians (*ilāhīyūn*) such as the followers of Aristotle and Plato who accepted the existence of God but gave Him different attributes. Of these three groups Ghazālī concentrated on the last one because the first two groups according to him were clearly not Islamic, whilst the last one at least seemed to be within the realm of Islamic thought.

Ghazālī was able to refute the main Aristotelian idea of 'nothing comes out of nothing' and 'every effect has a cause' which are the root of all other Aristotelian concepts, by his own original logical method. On the other hand he did not accept Neoplatonic idea that God created this world through a necessary emanation. Contrast to this Ghazālī believed that there must be eternally belong to God a will as one of His eternal attributes. He formulated this idea in following statement, "God has cognisance of the world because he wills it and in his willing it."<sup>815</sup>

According to Ghazālī, Aristotelian philosophers made fallacious claims on twenty points, on three of which they became unbelievers: for accepting the eternity of the world, for denying God's knowledge of the particulars, and for the rejection of the bodily resurrection.<sup>816</sup> On the other seventeen points the ideas of these philosophers were non-Islamic. Examples of which are the beliefs that: The world has no beginning and no end, God did not create the universe from nothing, God has

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815 - De Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, p. 162, 163.

816 - Ghazālī, Tahāfut al-Falāsifa, Cairo 1348, p. 376 (Quoted from A History of Islamic Philosophy by Majid Fakhry. p. 223).



not any attributes without being one, heavenly bodies have animal souls that move by volition and miracles are impossible, and human souls are immortal.<sup>817</sup>

Regarding the three points that Ghazālī claimed would lead to infidelity and can be seen to be linked to the idea that 'nothing comes out of nothing', he states that it is impossible to accept the eternity of the world in coexistence with God, because if we claim that, then God would need to use matter in order to create. Contrary to this, he believed that God's will and power is free to create this world out of nothing. Again Ghazālī maintained that God eternally willed to create the world in a particular period of time. Hence the idea of primary matter or shapeless matter which was formulated by Aristotle, is not acceptable from Ghazālī's point of view. Ghazālī pointed out that the idea of the eternity of the world was originally derived from those ancient axioms: Nothing comes out of nothing or something cannot come from nothing.<sup>818</sup>

The second argument was about whether God's knowledge is particular or universal. Again Aristotelian Muslim philosophers maintained that God's knowledge is merely general. In other words according to the Aristotelian philosophers, God knows only the universal things and not the particular.<sup>819</sup> However, Ghazālī attacked these views strongly by stating they compared human knowledge with God's knowledge. He insisted that God knows all the particulars and that everything is in need of God's omniscience. Therefore, the philosophers erred in using their intellect, to understand the Divine knowledge while their intellect is created for understanding the events of this world.

As regards the third argument concerning the possibility of bodily resurrection, Ghazālī maintained that the Muslim philosophers in support of their views had selected only the verses of the Qur'ān that would serve their purpose, whilst he believed that many passages in the Qur'ān contained references to the life hereafter

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817 - Ibid., p. 29f, 31f, Ibid., p. 224

818 - Sheikh, Islamic Philosophy, p. 89, 90.

819 - Ibn Rushd made this point clear by saying that God knows particulars in the universal form. But it does not mean that God can not know particulars.

in the form of physical body. The philosophers doubted the physical resurrection in the hereafter and insisted that the after life is purely spiritual as according to them the body of humans cannot exist in the Divine World. However, according to Ghazālī, God has the capability to create whatever He wants and in which condition he wants. Thus again, from Ghazālī's point of view the Muslim Aristotelians made the same mistake of confusing human capabilities with the omnipotence of God.

According to Ghazālī the philosophers denial of bodily resurrection originally comes from the Plotinus' definition of soul and body. This stated that the body belongs to this world but the soul belongs to the Divine World and as such the body is a prison for the soul with only the purification of the soul supplying freedom from this world. Ghazālī claimed that if we denied the bodily resurrection, then the other worldly body would not exist and for this reason there would be neither pain nor pleasure. Thus he argued that if it were to be believed that the soul alone would be resurrected in the hereafter, then Hell and Heaven will become meaningless.

Another important idea of Ghazālī concerned the occurrence of miracles which can be contrasted to the theory of causality which stated that "every effect has a cause". According to Ghazālī, the relationship between cause and effect was not one of necessity. In other words, there is no certain relationship between the cause and the effect. The cause and effect are only imagined, because we see two events in regular succession and so assume that one of them was the cause and the other its effect. In his book *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, Ghazālī argued that the connection observed between cause and effects is of logical necessity, and that the existence of the cause without the effect or the effect without the cause is not within the realms of the contingent and possible. Ghazālī also claimed that if we accepted the theory of causality then no miracle could have taken place, and to believe this would be against the majesty of God.<sup>820</sup>

-Mysticism: God is the cause of everything and so the final goal of a sufi is to become the lover of God. From Ghazālī's point of view the highest type of

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820 - Stephen Riker, "Ghazālī on Necessary Causality", *The Monist*, 1996, The Hegelian Institute, vol. 79, No. 3.



knowledge is direct experience. Neither Reason nor faith can help us to perceive the light of God. However Ghazālī claimed that we could perceive the light of God and the knowledge of truth (*ḥaqīqa*) through mystical experience. If a person succeeds in severing his/her relationship with the material world he/she achieves communication with God.

Unlike many other sufis Ghazālī did not agree with pantheists, he believed that God is both transcendental and immanent. Again he believed in the omnipotence and omniscience of God who granted free will to humans to chose their own way.<sup>821</sup>

However, the language he used in some of his writings appeared very similar to that used by some pantheists. For instant in the following extract in which he states; "And invoke not any other god (*ilāh*) along with God. His is the decision, and to Him you (all) shall be returned."<sup>822</sup> Indeed, everything other than He, considered in itself, is pure non-being, and, considered from the standpoint of the being which it receives from the First Reality.<sup>823</sup> While according to pantheists in general, God does not exist except through the universe, Ghazālī took another step and claimed that the universe does not exist at all because it is created from nothing.<sup>824</sup>

-Ethics: Ghazālī concentrated in particular upon the responsibility of humankind in this world. In analysing this problem he tended to investigate the issues surrounding free will and determinism. He argued that, causal determinism is incompatible with ethical responsibility. Like other Ash'ariyya, he claimed that all human actions were instigated by God but humanity was responsible only for their intentions and decisions.

According to Ghazālī, all vices come from the desires of the flesh and the ego (*nafs*), these lead to bodily excesses such as the abuse of sex, food and the misuse of speech. For these kinds of soul illnesses Ghazālī suggested as a remedy those things which would feed the soul and kindle the '*nafs*' and self-esteem. Of these,

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821 - Qadir, Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World, p. 99.

822 - The Qur'ān, 28: 88.

823 - Fakhry, Islamic Occasionalism, p. 7f.

824 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 251.

the most important, amongst other virtues was the renunciation of the materialistic world, the rejection of bodily excessive desires, and tending to the love of God. However, Ghazālī remained relentlessly intent on basing all of these mystical exercises upon Islamic law (*Sharī'a*).

#### b- Suhrawardī (1153-1191):

Shihāb ad-Dīn al-Suhrawardī combined Hellenistic tendencies, Orphic religion, as well as Hermetic and Zoroastrian ideas with elements of Sufism and Shī'ism. Although in Islamic thought the Illumination (*ishrāq*) philosophy was recognised as Suhrawardī's intellectual inspiration, its history both in the east and west, has a long and rich background. This process was first used in the fourth century by an Egyptian priest known as Hermes (*Hirmes*) as a kind of wisdom process.<sup>825</sup>

-Life writings: According to Ibn Abū Usaybia, Shihāb ad-Dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī was born in Suhraward, a small village near the town of Zencan in Azarbaycan. He was educated in Maragha, another city of Azerbeycan. From here he travelled to the Islamic centres of Iṣfahān, Mosul, Aleppo, Amid, Harput and Mardin where he met a number of sufi masters. From these cities, Suhrawardī took a liking to Aleppo and eventually returned there to live. Whilst in Mardin and Aleppo Suhrawardī, who was still only 28 years of age, started to discuss religion with the religious authorities. His use of strong philosophical and mystical language in opposing the orthodox Muslim authorities soon led to accusations of him being a pantheist and heretic by numerous authors. The great Muslim thinker al-Baghdadī in particular became opposed to Suhrawardī and made some quite strong as well as unusual accusations against him. Al-Baghdadī had held a high position in the Ayyūbīds

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825 - In some Islamic sources, Hermes was identified with the prophet Idrīs (Enoch) and for this reason some Muslim thinkers claimed that the first philosophical studies were started by a Prophet of God. The Qur'ān states; "And mention in the Book (the Qur'ān) Idrīs (Enoch). Verily! He was a man of truth, (and) a prophet. And We raised him to a high station" The Qur'ān, 19: 56, 57. On the other hand Hermes was sometimes credited as an equal to that of Moses in regard to his teaching and personal instructions in wisdom and righteous living.



government for 25 years and as a probable result of his opposition, Suhrawardī was punished for his ideas with the death penalty.<sup>826</sup>

At that time the third Crusader War was in progress and the great Salāh ad-Dīn Ayyūbī (1138-1193) who had taken over the mantle of Sultan did not want to risk the chance of any revolts inside the Muslim land, and for this reason he dispatched a letter to his son Prince Mālik Zāhir ordering him to give the death penalty to Suhrawardī. When Suhrawardī learnt of this he went to Mālik Zāhir and gave himself up. First of all Suhrawardī was imprisoned in Aleppo under the suspicion of pantheistic heresy and then finally put to death. Later Suhrawardī came to be known as “The Murdered” (*al-Maqtūl*) or “The Martyr” (*al-Shahīd*) to distinguish him from other famous two Suhrawardīs who were ‘Abd al-Qādir Ibn ‘Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī (1097-1168) a sufi and a scholar; and Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar Suhrawardī (1145-1234) who was also a sufi and a statesman.<sup>827</sup>

Although further information about Suhrawardī and his ideas can be found in a book called *The Purification of Souls (Nuzhatul Arwāh)* written by a disciple of his, Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī (d. C.1281), unfortunately no academic study of this book has yet been carried out. Suhrawardī’s main ideas were collected in his four books: *al-Mashāri*, *Theosophy of Illumination (Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq)*, *The Oppositions (Muqāwamāt)* and *Talwīḥāt*. In these books Suhrawardī pointed out his eclectic philosophy on the base of the mystical illumination theory and prophetic wisdom practice goes back the time of Hermes, Asclepius, Pythagoras, and Zoroaster. In fact this was a tendency of Ibn Sīnā.<sup>828</sup>

Besides the above books Suhrawardī also wrote a small but important treatise called *The Statue of Light (Heyākil an-Nūr)* in which can be found the summary of

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826 - Kaya, Türk-Islam Felsefesi Ders Notlari, (Lecturer notes on Turkish- Islamic Philosophy), Istanbul, 1984.

827 - Kaya, Türk-Islam Felsefesi Ders Notlari, (Lecturer notes on Turkish- Islamic Philosophy), Istanbul, 1984; Netton in his book *Seek Knowledge Thought and Travel in the House of Islam*, indicated similar information, pp. 45, 46.

828 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 294.

Suhrawardī's philosophy on the theory of illumination. However, Suhrawardī's main books were published in two volumes under the titles of *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica* by Henry Corbin. The First volume of Opera contains *al-Talwīḥāt*, *al-Muqāwamāt* and *Mutāharāt*, with this last book consisting of example from both the first two books. The second volume includes *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*, *I'tiqād al-Ḥukamā* (*The Philosophers Creed*) and *al-Gurbat al-Ḡharība* (*The Unusual Journey*). Henry Corbin also published a variety of Suhrawardī's didactic books under the title of *Ange Rouge (Red Angel)*.<sup>829</sup>

Suhrawardī's aim of his works was not only to inveigh against his adversaries, but also to set down the way of illumination by the enlightened revelation (*kashf*), through spiritual observation and practice of the mystical way.

-Philosophy: In his philosophy, Suhrawardī used the term of illumination to mean the fundamental reality of things. However, he developed his theory of light as a symbol of emanation that was different from that of the Aristotelians (*mashshā*) Muslim philosophers Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. However, he did attach value to both Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. Suhrawardī used to describe a dream in which Aristotle appeared to him and was asked whether any Muslim philosopher could be compared in similarity to Plato. Thereupon, Aristotle was said to have hinted at Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā.<sup>830</sup>

In his book *Oriental Philosophy* and *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqqān* (Living Son of the Awake) Ibn Sīnā called particular attention to the benefits of eastern wisdom and mystical thought. Thus, early expressions of the writings of this philosophy can be seen in his works which represented a type of philosophy mixed with Sufism. By in so doing Ibn Sīnā started an opposition movement against the exclusive reliance upon the western philosophy.

Like Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī in his later life had left the peripatetic path and tended towards experiential philosophy and mystical sufi living which he termed as

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829 - Kaya, Türk-Islam Felsefesi Ders Notlari, (Lecturer notes on Turkish- Islamic Philosophy), Istanbul, 1984.

830 - Walzer, Greek into Arabic, p.28.



illumination. When Suhrawardī came to Baghdad he was faced with a strong school which was largely affected by Ibn Sīnā and so found himself ready to accept the mythical experience as described by Ibn Sīnā's later writings. Suhrawardī was then educated by this school and became a representative of its higher eastern wisdom. Thus Ibn Sīnā's project was eventually to be fulfilled by Suhrawardī himself.

Suhrawardī's aim was gained through an experiential approach to truth which he called illumination (*ishrāq*), whilst Aristotelians claimed only the reasonable way. In other words, he rejected the Peripatetic theory of sensation by imprinting and held that sensation ultimately consists in a sound sense organ being in the presence of the thing that it sensed.<sup>831</sup> However, according to Suhrawardī humans can learn truth directly by the inner light which is, as a gift from God.

Suhrawardī's illumination theory was more eclectic than earlier Illumination ideas such as Plotinus, due to the fact that his thought included Hermetic Traditions, Hellenic inspirations, Zoroastrian sages, ancient Prophets, as well as Islamic Sufism.<sup>832</sup> Even after the death of Suhrawardī, his Iranian followers created a new Shī'i sect called *Ishrāqiyya*. Some sufi movements were also influenced by Suhrawardī's *Ishrāqī* ideas even to the point of incorporating its form and language into their own training systems.

His ideas spread to both the East and West with its western path coming through Empedocles, Pythagoras and Plato. The second path to the East had been led by Gayomārth, Farīdūn, Kay-Khusraw, Bisṭāmī and Ḥallāj.<sup>833</sup> Therefore after a long time, by the study of Suhrawardī, these two chains had finally been united. At the same time Suhrawardī claimed that the knowledge of the universal Illumination which was originally revealed to Hermes, had been followed through an unbroken chain to al-Bisṭāmī, al-Ḥallāj and completed by Suhrawardī himself.

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831 - John Walbridge, "Suhrawardī, a Twelfth-Century Muslim Neo-Stoic?" *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, October 1996, vol. 34, Number 4,

832 - Netton, *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the Hose of Islam*, p. 49.

833 - *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, vol. 4, p. 121.

Suhrawardī emphasised that the illumination was not only discursive, but rather it was a path to direct knowing and an important experiential. For this reason, the way of illumination according to Suhrawardī, involves a theoretical and an experiential knowledge. The representative of the theoretical knowledge was termed a theosophist, or wise man who is the master of the discursive method.<sup>834</sup>

Suhrawardī's *Ishrāq* philosophy was built upon the diffusion of light. On the first hand, *Ishrāq* has immaterial and indefinable attributes which require no definition, but as the all-pervasive reality, light enters into the composition of every entity as the essential component thereof. On the opposite side there is darkness. All things originally come from darkness and then light is added as an extraneous source. Thus, it was concluded that beings consist both from darkness and light.

From here Suhrawardī claimed that there were similarities between the light and the human self (*nafs*) which is also apprehended without any definition, whilst every other act of apprehension depends on it. In this way Suhrawardī defined the light as the manifestation of itself and the manifest of other things. But for its corporal or material apprehension it requires a bodily organ.

-**Epistemology:** Suhrawardī tried to establish a philosophical system on the base of Epistemology and Psychology. For this reason he started to philosophise by stating that in the human soul there is the conscious, which is the representative of the relationship between things and mole (*nafs*).

Nevertheless, whilst Suhrawardī claimed that it was possible to build up the knowledge of this world through the senses, he stated that this would only be the first step of knowledge. Like Plato, Suhrawardī accepted that the physical objects in this world were only the shadow of the Ideal World, and so for this reason to stay at the first level step of knowledge would not bring any real truth other than a perception of changeable images.

The second step was considered then by Suhrawardī to be the knowledge of the soul. Yet this does not pertain to the usual matters such as the nature of soul, rather

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834 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 296.



it is the knowledge of consciousness. Suhrawardī, like Descartes and Ghazālī before him, used a methodical scepticism to first find an unshakeable starting point. So he was able to reach a cognisance of the conscious from the first starting place which is the fundamental relationship between man and nature.

The third step of knowledge according to Suhrawardī is the metaphysics which can only be perceived by the intellect. He believed that there are three groups of existence: the necessary existence, which is God; the possible existence, which contains both the world of the soul and the material world; the impossible existence, which is a kind of abstract, such as darkness or 'absence' that does not exist physically but yet we accept their tacit existence in for example the absence of existence of light. Thus, for these three fields there are three types of knowledge; the knowledge of God, metaphysics (The world of the soul), and physics (this sensible world).

For Suhrawardī, the main aim of seeking any knowledge was to attain the knowledge of God. Although he stated that God is one, he also believed that we can not attribute to him any quality, as he is different from the attributes of human since things are many but God is only one. As a result of this belief he was accused by the Muslim orthodoxy of denying the attributes of God and on account of this idea he was executed.

-Being and Essence: Suhrawardī departed from the traditional Peripatetic understanding of the doctrine of substance (the duality of matter and form). He claimed that the discussion concerning the principality of existence over essence neglects the fact that essence is a degree of existence. He believed that all things progress from the primary source of reality or undergo a devolution from the highest to the lowest plane of luminosity in a gradual process.<sup>835</sup>

Therefore starting from the correct psychological perspective Suhrawardī accepted that there are essentially two substances, one is finite and the other infinite. Finite substances include body and matter which take up room, as well as the soul which can be perceived by its attribute of thinking. The infinite substance is the unlimited

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835 - Mc Greal, Great Thinkers of the Eastern World. p. 470.

Divine knowledge which has been placed in the soul of humanity before he was born. Thus from here Suhrawardī reached the conclusion that the human soul or conscious can only comprehend this unlimited knowledge through illumination rather than worldly knowledge.

Concerning the relationship between body and soul Suhrawardī said that this relationship consisted only in the material field. Here the soul accepts the capacity of realisation, termed '*ḥiss mushtarak*' which is a common co-operative joint sense of perception. The joint sense is a place in the human soul where the five senses come together (hearing, touching, smelling, tasting and seeing). Besides this sensual essence, the soul also accepts a number of other inner senses: memory, the capacity of intellect or realisation, fancy and groundlessness (*wahm*).

It is interesting to note that these senses often conflict, for example the function of groundlessness runs against the function of reason. For instance, if we are alone with a dead person in the same room our reason would tell us not to be afraid as the dead person is harmless, whilst our groundlessness would say that it is quite dangerous as the dead person may resuscitate at any time.

In fact, Suhrawardī concluded that the main reason for the mistakes of the philosophers was as a direct result of this groundlessness. Consequently, this sense led some thinkers to erroneously deny either matter or the soul.

-Ethics: According to Suhrawardī, when the soul tends to move towards the Divine World through the mystical exercises it is capable of reaching Divine pleasures. Therefore, he believed that general happiness depends upon becoming independent of material things and ordinary pleasures because he claimed that the soul and body have different attributes and so for this reason the soul must be free from bodily yearnings and desires.

Suhrawardī believed that if we were to follow our bodily pleasures then ultimately it is the soul that will become servant to the body, whilst on the other hand, if we educate our soul through illumination then the body will become its subject. Thus, we should place our body under the rule of the soul by eating, sleeping and even



speaking less. These sufi exercises will supply the soul an *atraxy* (tranquillity of mind), and a sensual apathy (insensibility against to desire).

In short, it is true that like many other Muslim philosopher Suhrawardī was a Muslim in his inner world, he followed successfully in the footsteps of his predecessor Ibn Sīnā in using philosophical and mystical language to interpret Islamic wisdom. Al-Suhrawardī's other lasting contribution to the culture of Islam was that many aspects of his experiential method for the enlightenment of the soul were retained and are still practised today by certain sufi movements.

On the other hand, the influence of the Suhrawardī's *Ishrāqī* ideas was felt throughout the Muslim lands and it had an important influence upon three different spheres of Muslim thought: in particular on the philosophical writings of Nasīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī<sup>836</sup>; on the Religious tendency of the Iranian *Shī'ī* commentators; and on the mystical writings of Ibn 'Arabī.

#### b- Ibn al-'Arabī (1165-1240):

Ibn 'Arabī was the greatest representative of sufi philosophy in the systematic period of Sufism. The illumination theory of Suhrawardī was felt throughout Sufism particularly Ibn 'Arabī's writings. However, by Ibn 'Arabī's mystical writing, Ibn Rushd's philosophy and Suhrawardī's *Ishrāqī* ideas Sufism had gained a philosophical character. Ibn 'Arabī's mystical thought played a considerable role in the development of Sufism both through thought and practice.<sup>837</sup> Although his theory of "Unity of Being" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) culminated and combined all the various paths of sufi thought into a single system. While his ideas about the Unity of Being sometimes led to accusations of him being called a heretic (*kāfir*),

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836 - 'Abdurrazāq b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī b. Ishāq, Abū al-Maḥāsīn Shihābuddīn al-Ṭūsī (d. c. 1122). He was a minister at the time of sultan Sanjar Shāh al-Saljūqī. His teacher was Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī. He died in Nishabūr. He had a strong sympathy with the Twelver Shī'a, and to whom a certain degree of mercy was shown during the Mongol holocaust and whose sanctuaries were spared. He wrote on dogmatic, logic and philosophy, law and all on the sciences in particular on astronomy.

837 - Rizvi, A History of Sufism in India, vol. 2, p. 1.

sometime he was regarded as “The Grand Master” (*shaikh al-akbar*) of Islamic mystical thought.

On the first hand, since Ibn ‘Arabī’s philosophical mysticism was built up on his inner experience and symbolic writing his doctrine have suffered numerous misunderstanding. On the other hand if western scholars try to reduce his doctrine to the categories of Western philosophies (monism, pantheism), they run the risk of distorting its perspectives.<sup>838</sup>

**-Life and Writing:** Abū Bakr Muḥammad Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī was born in Murjia, an old city of Andalus (Spain) in 1165. He first joined a sufi training circle there at the school of Ibn al Masarraḥ (d. 931). In addition to this, al-‘Arabī attended some lectures of other famous masters, such as al-Tirmidhī (d. 898), al-Wāsitī (d. 942) and Ibn al-‘Ārif (d. 1141) before himself becoming renowned for his understanding of Averroes philosophy. However Ibn ‘Arabī was soon to partake in his famous journey whereby he travelled extensively to the centres of learning of that time throughout the Islamic world, he visited places such as Seville, Córdoba, Marrakech, Tunis, Cairo, Konya, Mecca, Baghdad, and Damascus.<sup>839</sup> During his travels ,Ibn ‘Arabī married a Persian sufi girl before eventually settling in Damascus, where he made his home in 1223 and lived until his death in 1240.<sup>840</sup>

Ibn ‘Arabī wrote two major books during his life time, *Meccan Revelations (al-Futuhāt al-Makkīya)* and *The Wisdom of the Prophets (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)* which centre around his concept of the ‘unity of being’. However, these books contain many other titles which varied from the interpolation of the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, to discourses of law, comparative philosophy, Islamic theology, esoteric sciences and meditative practice. Ibn al-‘Arabī, in books reinterpreted the history of prophecy and mysticism. He claimed that from Adam to Muḥammad every prophet correspond a Logos (*kalīma*), which is an order of the Divine Being and that even

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838 - Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī*, Translated by Ralph Manheim, p. 7.

839 - Mc Greal, *Great Thinker of the Eastern World*, p. 475.

840 - Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 251.



the saints or mystics can reach some Divine degree whereby they can receive a kind of Divine Revelation (*ilhām*).<sup>841</sup>

**-Theory of the Unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*):** First of all, Ibn ‘Arabī started to propagate his theories with a criticism of both the classical Islamic theory of creation, where in the Muslims believe that God created the universe out of nothing, and the Christian doctrine of incarnation, which stated that God and humans are the same. Besides this, Ibn al-‘Arabī also rejected the theory of Ḥallāj and attacked his concept of *fanā’*. According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, Ḥallāj and his followers supposed that *fanā’* is the soul’s union with God, but in fact he claimed that *fanā’* means the awareness of a person’s oneness with God, for there is nothing save God.

According to Ibn ‘Arabī, God is the ultimate cause of everything. God is one in His essence yet at the same time He is Plural in his manifestation (*tajalliyāt*). Before the creation, the Divine Being had been an undivided existence but after the creation this Reality divided as the aspect of unity (*aḥādīyya*), and the aspect of lordship (*rubūbiyya*). In other words God in His first attribute is the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*), who is pure light and pure good, but in His second attribute God is considered in relation to His attributes because God manifests Himself in everything. Thus everything is a manifestation of God and yet God is a separate entity also. Therefore, God entered into a relationship with the world and becomes an object of worship, and so He is the ‘Real’ and at the same time Lord.

However, according some accounts Ibn ‘Arabī believed that the Creator and the Created are not the same as Plotinus claimed. On the other hand, al-‘Arabī’s God was not the religious God who had been accepted by the orthodox Muslims, but in contrast to this, God was above all of these basic images.<sup>842</sup> Thus ‘Arabī’s views concerning the Creator and the created differed both from those of philosophers such as Plotinus as well as the Muslim orthodoxy.

Ibn ‘Arabī, gave the title of the “perfect man” (*al-insān al-kāmil*) for the Prophet of Islam. However, this was not in reference to the historical personality of

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841 - Ibid., p. 154 .

842 - Qadir, Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World, p. 102.

Muhammad but rather to the highest and final revelation of God's word (*kalīma*). Some claim that Ibn al-'Arabī identified his theory of the 'perfect man' with the first intellect of the Neoplatonist cosmology and the Christian Logos, as well as the Shī'i concept of the *Imām*. Humans know God, both His essential Reality and the manifestation of this reality in the phenomenal world (*khalq*).<sup>843</sup>

On the other hand, Ibn 'Arabī also believed that through the mystical experience a soul can know the unity of the whole, and its own identity with this whole reality. If a sufi reaches this highest level, he will not accept any other being or activity other than God. In other words, this is similar to nihilism (*fanā'*) of Junayd and Ghazālī's nihilism in unity (*al-fanā' fī 'l-tawḥīd*).<sup>844</sup>

Thus, in conclusion, whilst the system of Ibn 'Arabī affirmed the plurality of Gods existence, it also denied that the soul of man would reunite with the Universal Reason and had the effect of shattering the normal main dualism between creator and creations or ordinary things and the Divine Being. This world and the Hereafter as well as believer and unbeliever are the same. Thus Ibn al-'Arabī's approach to the concept of the mystical union was more philosophical than pure sufi in tendency. Indeed his writings and use of language showed him in many ways to be different from the orthodox mystics and theologians.

#### F- THE CONCEPT OF *ḤIKMA*, *MA'RIFA* AND *IḤSĀN* IN SUFISM:

As has been mentioned, Sufism was started for the first time as an esoteric movement against the political divisions and increasing luxury, which seemed to be the cause of the corruption of the Islamic society, in particular in the third century of Islam. However, sufis also fought on the theoretical field against the absolute rationalist thinking based on predominant theological discussions, and the extremist interpretation of Islamic law (*Sharī'a*).

The above conflicts resulted in a division in the Muslim body of opinion with one group of Muslims tending towards the mystical interpretation of Islam and joint sufi

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843 - Fakhry, A History of Islamic Philosophy, p. 154 .

844 - Ibid., p. 155.



orders (*ṭarīqa*), because of their unsatisfactory social situations. Their basic aim was to find a tolerant and dynamic way of life on which the good ethical behaviour and naive spiritual character can be established. Thus, Sufism at the beginning was carrying the element of wisdom in its natural character to fight against the negative images of society.

From the beginning of Islamic history to the end of the third century, Islamic law continued to be practised on the foundation of wisdom as a dynamic process. However, at the end of this first successful period, the Islamic wisdom (*ḥikma*) gradually lost its relevance in Islamic jurisprudence, because of the blind imitation (*ṭaqlīd*) on the speculative juristic ground and political degeneration.

The result of the above negative factors, was that the understanding of Islamic wisdom moved from Islamic law (*Sharī'a*), both to sufi practices and the philosophical systems in the form of theosophy. In other words, wisdom could not live at that time in the strict atmosphere of Islamic law, and theology then passed to Sufism and philosophy. Therefore, Islamic wisdom understanding indeed did not die, but moved into Sufism and philosophy. Thus, in the history of Islam just after the third century of Islam, one may look for a wisdom understanding in Sufism, more than any other Islamic discipline.

When the usage of wisdom was forgotten in Islamic law (*Sharī'a*) as a dynamic understanding and method, many points of Islamic law became quite hard, inflexible and static. As the result of this, many Muslims tended to turn naturally towards Sufism because of its soft and tolerant, as well as flexible nature. In this way, Sufism used wisdom as the base on which its theoretical and practical principles could be established.

The evidence for the importance of wisdom in sufi writing, is that most of the sufi masters and writers gave for their studies the name '*ḥikma*' (wisdom). Among these books, Suhrawardī's *The light of Wisdom (Ḥikma al-Ishrāq)*, Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Ibn 'Atā'illāh's *The Book of Wisdom (Kitāb al-Ḥikma)* can be mentioned here. Beside these books, many treatises of sufis on the theosophical (*ḥikma*) base

also bear the title of "the beginning an end" (*al-mabda' wa al-ma'ād*) in which there are a summary fashion, all truth and wisdom.<sup>845</sup>

However, from time to time, to achieve their task sufis tended to use philosophy in the strict sense for their reasoning. Because of this, they sometimes reached unacceptable conclusions in the eyes of orthodox Muslims. For instance, Suhrawardī, Ibn 'Arabī and most of their disciples unlike orthodox sufis, combined philosophy and religion in an extremist inner level through theosophical and mystical language, which were far from the interpretation of orthodox Islamic authorities.

### 1- *Hikma* (Wisdom):

In sufi traditional writing, wisdom (*ḥikma*) is frequently defined as the hidden knowledge or insight for the perfection of the soul. Ghazālī for example, defined the concept of wisdom as a state of the soul, by which one perceives right from wrong in all voluntary actions.<sup>846</sup> According to the sufi Sahl al-Tustarī, wisdom and the Qur'ān are both the instruction methods by which one can strengthen, and enrich his spiritual self (*nafs rūḥika*).<sup>847</sup>

In his book *Science of Heart* (*'Ilm al-Qulūb*), Makkī frequently employs crucial verses of the Qur'ān as the starting point for discussion of his mystical ideas. He deals with the mystical thought of the sufi Gnostic (*'ārīf*) concerning wisdom (*ḥikma*), which includes oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) on the one hand and the sincerity (*ikhlas*) and pure intention (*niyya*) on the other. In this way, he tried to show the real picture of the believer (*mu'min*) in certain basic sufi practices (*'amal*),<sup>848</sup> because one of the strong meanings of wisdom is the practical application of knowledge, in a soft and kind way.

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845 - Nasr, *Living Sufism*, p. 81.

846 - Ghazālī, *Revival of the Religious Science*, vol. 3. p. 1442.

847 - De Gruyter, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, p. 116.

848 - *Ibid.*, pp. 27.



However, the Muslim mystics did not hesitate to take wisdom elements from Greek philosophy, because they strongly believed that Greek philosophers derived their ideas from the same source as the Prophets' Divine wisdom. For instance, a group of Muslim philosophers called Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', who lived around the tenth century and represented theosophical and mystical ideas, identified philosophy with wisdom (*ḥikma*). According to this, Muslim philosophers are the main source of philosophy in the revelations, which was given to the ancient prophets by God.<sup>849</sup> Therefore, from these Prophets, Greek philosophers learnt the art and sciences as well as *ḥikma* and philosophy. Maybe for this reason Ibn Sīnā always tended to combine Greek philosophy with wisdom (*ḥikma*)' since like Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' he believed that philosophy was originally the possession of the ancient prophets, and was the same wisdom revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad as a whole at a later date.<sup>850</sup>

But it appears that after Suhrawardī the term of *ḥikma* has been used more and more to designate the doctrine of the complete sage, who is both a philosopher and mystic.<sup>851</sup> In this way *ḥikma* was recognised as a kind of inspiration. With the aid of this inspiration, Suhrawardī was able to realise his project of restoring the theosophy of ancient pre-Islamic Persia. However, it took its last form with the gnosis of Ibn al-'Arabī as the metaphysics of Sufism, as well as with the traditional Shī'i teachings.<sup>852</sup>

According to al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, the soul must be purified by improving the following faculties, in order for noble qualities to emerge. By cultivating the faculty of thought, wisdom and knowledge, and modesty and generosity.<sup>853</sup> Therefore, the education or training of the soul requires the science of wisdom (*ḥikma*). By this science, it is easy for a person to purify and built up his/her

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849 - Nasr, *Islamic Cosmological Doctrine*, p. 33.

850 - *Ibid.*, p. 184.

851 - Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 153.

852 - *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

853 - Yasin Moḥammed, *The ethical Philosophy of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī*, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 6:1 (1995) p. 69.

character which refers to its dealing with the external world through other creations.<sup>854</sup>

## 2- Ma'rifa:

In the eyes of sufis the idea of *ḥikma* (wisdom) is not just theology or philosophy, but a kind of theosophy -in sufi writing *ma'rifa*- by which one can understand the hidden causes of the visible world and insight of events. For instance, the contemporary Indian writer Rizvi, in his book *A History of Sufism in India* gives the explanation of wisdom as the following: "The authentic wisdom (*ma'rifa*) is that of the soul, which, knows itself as a theophany, an individual form in which are emphasised the Divine Attributes which it would be unable to know if it did not discover and apprehend them in itself."<sup>855</sup>

The word *ma'rifa* is a noun derived from the verb *'a-ra-fa*. It is a synonym of the term *'ilm*. According to Ibn Manṣūr, *ma'rifa* is that which enables a person to recognise and to identify things. The term *ma'rifa* always contains the indication of an attribute, through which its subject is identified. The tradition (*ḥadīth*) of Ibn Mas'ūd is explained, "If God describes Himself by means of an attribute through which we can authenticate Him, then we know Him".<sup>856</sup>

In mystical thought, it is the knowledge (*'ilm*) which does not admit doubt, since its object (*ma'lūm*) is the Essence of God and his attributes.<sup>857</sup> For instance, in his book *The Science of Heart ('Ilm al Qulūb)* the great sufi Makkī deals with the mystical thought of the sufi Gnostic (*'ārif*) concerning wisdom (*ḥikma*) and oneness of God (*tawḥīd*). To clarify this mystical idea Makkī frequently employs the verses of the Qur'ān as the starting point for them. His discussions turn around the following topics (which are the different faces of Islamic wisdom): sincerity

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854 - Arberry, *The Doctrine of Sufism*, p.75.

855 - Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, p. 49.

856 - *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, vol. 6, p. 568- b.

857 - *Ibid.*, p. 569- a.



(*ikhlaṣ*), pure intention (*niyya*), to be believer (*mu'min*), and sufi practices (*'ama*).<sup>858</sup>

Therefore, it is evident that the sufi way of life can be based on the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) and wisdom (*ḥikma*) or *ma'rifa*. This kind of explanation is quite fit to the Qur'anic wisdom understanding. The term *ma'rifa* is realised only for those to whom there is revealed something of the invisible (*al-ghayb*), in such a way that God is proved simultaneously by manifest and by hidden signs. Such is the *ma'rifa* of men "anchored in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhīn fīl 'l-ilm*).<sup>859 - 860</sup>

In this connection, one of the great sufis al-Shiblī said "When you are attached to God, not to your works, and when you look at nothing other than Him, then you have a perfect *ma'rifa*."<sup>861</sup> In the same subject, al-Ruwaym (d. 915), said "For the *'arif*, *ma'rifa* is a mirror; when he looks at it, his Lord shines there for him."<sup>862</sup> The *'arif* is he who acts for the pleasure of God, without gaining anything for himself by this action.<sup>863</sup>

In his book *The Book of Wisdom (Kitāb al-Ḥikma)*, Ibn 'Aṭā'ullāh's main theme is gnosis (*ma'rifa*). Gnosis is not merely an act of the intelligent; it demands a total participation, and *adab* (the pious conformity of the soul).<sup>864</sup> In this sense *ḥikma* means "wisdom" as well as "aphorism", "maxim, or 'gnome'. Here the relationship between the terms *ḥikma* and *ma'rifa* (gnosis), is manifest enough; for both imply a profound knowledge, in this case an experiential or concrete knowledge of the real (*al-ḥaqq*). Because of this Ibn 'Aṭā'ullāh wishes to bring out in his book not only

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858 - De Gruyter, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, p. 27.

859 - The Qur'ān, 3: 7 and 4: 162.

860 - *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, vol. 6, p, 569- a.

861 - *Ibid.*, p, 569- b.

862 - *Ibid.*, p, 570- a.

863 - *Ibid.*, p, 569- b.

864 - Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, *Kitāb al-Ḥikam, ('Aṭā'illāh's Sufi Aphorisms) Translated by Victor Danner*, p.11.

the theoretical basis of Sufism and its abstract contours, but also its spiritual repercussion in the soul.<sup>865</sup>

### 3- *Ihsān*:

The other concept *ihsān* relates also similar meaning to the concept of *hikma*. In the famous tradition of Jibrīl, the Prophet describes *ihsān* as the innermost dimension of Islam. Because of its importance for wisdom, it has been quoted here. It was narrated from ‘Umar as following: “One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of God, there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black; no sign of journeying were to be seen on him and none of us knew him. He walked up and sat down by the Prophet. Resting his knees against his and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs, he said: O Muḥammad, tell me about Islam. The Prophet said: Islam is to testify that there is no god but God and Muḥammad is the messenger of God, to perform the prayers, to pay the zakāt, to fast in Ramaḍān, and to make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so. He said: You have spoken rightly, and we were amazed at him asking him and saying that he had spoken rightly. He said: Then tell me about *īmān*. He said: It is to believe in God, His angels, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in divine destiny, both the good and the evil thereof. He said you have spoken rightly. He said: Then tell me about *ihsān*. He said: It is to worship Allah as though you see Him, and while you see him not, yet truly He sees you. He said: Then tell me about the Hour. He said: The one questioned about it knows no better than the questioner...Then he (the Prophet) said: O ‘Umar do you know who the questioner was? I said: God and His Messenger Knows best. He said: It was Gabriel, who came to you to teach you your religion.”<sup>866</sup>

In this tradition, it became clear that *ihsān* is a deepened understanding and experience that means “to worship God as if you see him.” For this reason, many scholars used this tradition as an evidence for the argument that Islamic mysticism

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865 - Ibid., p. 11-13.

866 - Nawawī, Forty ḥadīth, ḥadīth no: 2, p. 28.



is the way of sincere Muslims. Therefore, *ihsān* has been represented through sufi teachings as a sincere practice (*'amah*), while the *Sharī'a* manifested Islam as a whole, and Islamic Theology (*'Ilm al-kalām*) manifested *īmān*. Because sufis strive to always be aware of God's presence, in both the world and themselves, and to act appropriately.

### Conclusion:

Sufism as an instruction method is the gaining of esoteric knowledge concerning the experiences and relationship, between humankind and God. However, to achieve this task and reach the Ultimate Truth, sufis needed wisdom to guide them to develop a communicate as an esoteric inner dimension. Thus, Islamic wisdom found free room in *Sufism*, as the tolerant approach and instruction method. Because of this wisdom foundation, Sufism progressed easily and spread widely in a short time all over the Islamic world.

Although Sufism has sometimes borrowed some of its concepts and formulations from Neoplatonist doctrines, Christian mysticism, Persian and Indian spiritual cultures, it always assimilated these foreign elements into its own view of reality and tended to direct them towards its own objectives. In this connection, sufi concepts of *fiqh*, *ma'rifa*, and *ḥikma* refer to almost the same areas, and are represented by similar terminology. Therefore, to understand Islam as a whole one can not neglect Sufism as one of the grounds for wisdom practice.

Due to Ghazālī's opposition to philosophy both philosophical tendencies and wisdom understanding were harmed. Yet, many wisdom aspects passed through the mystical Sufi writing, because Ghazālī did not criticise Sufism forcibly, rather he recommended it as the real representative of Islamic way of life.

## CHAPTER X

# THE DECLINE OF WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY

### Introduction:

The decline of philosophy and wisdom in the Muslim World can be attributed to a number of factors. Perhaps the most important underlying factor is the general loss of free thinking which came to characterise the intellectual endeavours of Muslims scholars. This intellectual stagnation occurred despite the fact that the Qur'ān and the Sunna contain numerous appeals to human beings to observe the natural world and learn from past history.

The early phase of Islamic history was punctuated by an intellectual environment which greatly encouraged originality in thinking. To account for the gradual shift away from this situation, it is necessary to address the possibility that a fundamental change occurred in people's normative understanding of Islam. In this respect a number of factors can be identified. On the one hand, there seems to have been a gradual swing away from the Qur'ān towards the Sunna in terms of the relative importance of the primary sources. Closely related to this is a concomitant tendency towards re-defining the boundaries of what was commonly regarded as Sunna. In addition to these developments, one must remain sensitive to the continuing impact of those alien thought systems which were being successfully absorbed within the wider Islamic polity. In this regard both Western philosophy and Eastern mysticism played important roles in the intellectual development of the Muslim world. Although these two intellectual currents were not complete anathema to the central Islamic understanding, nevertheless many scholars expressed concern over what they felt to be some fundamental tensions between these traditions and the primacy of pure Islamic monotheism.

### 1- Neglect of the Qur'ān:

Both the Prophet and his Companions stressed the centrality of the Qur'ān and recommended the Muslim community to do the same. Despite this, the popularity of *ḥadīth* began to increase significantly from quite an early stage. However, the



companions (*ṣaḥāba*) were apprehensive in according the Sunna any kind of status which approximated to that of the Qur'ān.

The following tradition from Imām Abū Yūsuf is indicative of this apprehension. It is narrated that “‘Umar warned a group of companions, who were setting out for Kūfa, to relate traditions from the Prophet only sparingly, because the people there were humming with the Qur'ān like bees”. The import of this tradition is that the importance of the relationship between every believer and their knowledge of the Qur'ān is such that it should not be threatened by anything, including the narration of *ḥadīth*.<sup>867</sup> It is clear that ‘Umar, like other learned companions, was afraid that a time would come when the importance of *ḥadīth* would threaten to eclipse that of the Qur'ān. This might explain why he began to collect those *ḥadīth* in circulation, initially with a view to preserving them, but ultimately to burn them, on account of the proliferation of inauthentic traditions and the growing importance of the entire area in popular understanding.<sup>868</sup>

The Sunna has two primary functions *vis-a-vis* the Qur'ān. The first is to explain its general commands, the second is to give additional information which does not appear in the Qur'ān. However, after Shāfi‘ī the Sunna acquired the same status as the Qur'ān, with Muslim scholars tending to focus on the traditions at the expense of the Qur'ān. Thus the rather odd idea developed that to understand the Qur'ān one first needed to consult the Sunna, rather than the more logical (not to mention historically accurate) notion that the Sunna actually presupposes the Qur'ān as foundational.

Until the time of Shāfi‘ī it was common practice to interpret the Qur'ān freely, by calling on rational understanding. However, after Shāfi‘ī the Sunna came to be viewed as Divine revelation (*wahy*) in its own right, which was revealed to the Prophet and identified with textual information from the Prophet. A direct result of this was that scholars began to neglect new interpretations of the Qur'ān, and to rely

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867 - Schacht, *The Origin of Muḥammadian jurisprudence*, p. 28.

868 - Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Tabaqāt*, vol. 1/3, p. 206 (Quoted from *Muhammedi Sunnetin Ihyasi*, by Mahammed Abu Rayya, Istanbul 1986).

on the Sunna. The emergent stress on tradition narrowly defined, and the move towards imitation *taqlīd*, were justified on the grounds that making errors when dealing directly with the Qur'ān was simply too big a risk to take.

In short, while the first generations focused on the meaning and application of the Qur'ān, approximately three hundred years after the death of the Prophet, Muslims, for the reasons outlined above, elevated the *ḥadīth* to an unprecedented position of importance in the formulation of the faith. It should be pointed out that the phenomenon in question does not imply that the Qur'ān was in any way relegated to a residual epistemological source. Nevertheless, the Qur'ān gradually lost its central position, becoming the subject of abstract theological discussions rather than the definitive source of practical guidance which it was intended to be.

## 2- The Alteration of the concept of Sunna:

According to Muslim authorities the Sunna represents an explanatory and commendatory source that sheds further light on the meaning of the Qur'ān.<sup>869</sup> Therefore to understand and apply Islam properly requires one to be aware of the Sunna as the second main source in Islam. Sunna is also important because according to Shāfi'ī it has a further conceptual value as a representative of Islamic wisdom.

In keeping with this understanding the communities under the first Caliphs followed the Sunna of the Prophet by seeking to understand its wisdom rather than adopting a strict textual approach. For instance, when the second Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was asked about a successor after him, he replied that he could either follow the Prophet and leave the matter open or follow Abū Bakr and make an appointment.<sup>870</sup>

Until the collection of *ḥadīth* was completed and the move towards the orthodox traditionalist movement picked up momentum, Muslim scholars regarded several sources of religious authority. For example, the fourth caliph 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib observed that both the Prophet and Abū Bakr applied forty lashes as a penalty for

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869 - Taymiya, Ibn Taymiya on Public and Private Law in Islam, p. 4.

870 - Muslim, Sahih, Kitāb al-'Imāra, Chapter DCCLV, ḥadīth no: 4486, vol 3, p. 1013.



drinking while ‘Umar applied eighty; in the words of the tradition, “All these are Sunna”.<sup>871</sup> This extremely flexible understanding is reflected in al-Ṭabarī’s history, where Sunna includes: Sunna of God, Sunna of the Prophet, Sunna of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. Thus it is completely incorrect to assume that the early generation of Muslims rigidly circumscribed the concept of Sunna.<sup>872</sup>

The first jurists followed the understanding of the companions in maintaining that Islamic authority includes the Qur’ān, the Sunna of the Prophet, the Sunna of the first Caliphs and the Sunna of the companions.<sup>873</sup>

However, as I have previously noted, the period proceeding from Shāfi‘ī witnessed a significant alteration in the commonly understood meaning of Sunna, at which time it came to be associated exclusively with the Sunna of the Prophet. A further move which aided the process of ossification was Shāfi‘ī’s limiting identification of the Sunna of the Prophet with strict textual forms; this was in blatant disregard of the fact that some aspects of the Sunna were strictly practical, and therefore outside the scope of textual writing or oral narration.

This rather static understanding of Sunna automatically ruled out a large portion of *ḥadīth*. Many *ḥadīth* which had previously enjoyed widespread acceptance now had their reliability thrown into serious doubt thanks to the new dogmatic rigidity. Shāfi‘ī stated that “...if something is reliably related from the Prophet, I do not venture to neglect it, no matter what is the number of the companions who seem to disagree with it.”<sup>874</sup>

The first considerable body of legal traditions from the Prophet was compiled towards the middle of the second century. However, many collections<sup>875</sup> were put

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871 - Abū Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Kharāj, p. 326.

872 - Brown, Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought, p. 10, 11.

873 - ‘Abd al-Karīm Zaydan, al-Madkhal li Dirāsāt al-Sharī‘a, p. 159.

874 - Abu Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Ikhtilāf Mālik wal-Shāfi‘ī, p. 148, (Quoted from The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence, by Joseph Schacht, p. 11).

875 - They are the works of the Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Māja and Nasā‘ī. The other well-known collections of traditions are by Ibn Ḥanbal, Dārimī, and Bayhaqī.

into circulation only after Shāfi‘ī in the third century. This means that a large number of traditions were documented after the successive stages of development of theological doctrines and the juristic schools during the first centuries of Islam.<sup>876</sup>

While a fairly systematic method existed for establishing the relative strengths of *ḥadīth* in terms of charting the chain of narration, there is nothing really corresponding to the science of establishing the chronological circumstances of the different sections of the Qur’ān, known as “*asbab al-nuzūl*”. Shaibānī said: “I asked ‘Abdullāh b. Abī ‘Aufa, ‘Did Allah’s Apostle carry out the stoning (*rajam*) penalty,. He said, “Yes.” I said, “Before the revelation of *Sūrat-an-Nūr* or after it . He replied, “I do not know.”<sup>877</sup>

The tendency towards harmonising *ḥadīth* which appear to contradict each other “*al-tawfīq bayn al-nuṣūṣ*” became far more common after Imām Shāfi‘ī. In this respect one should not underestimate the influence of Imām Shāfi‘ī’s book “*Kitāb al-Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth*”, in which he presented a systematic methodology. Shāfi‘ī refused to consider that any traditions from the Prophet could contradict the Qur’ān or other *ḥadīth*. Where two conflicting traditions could not be harmonised, Shāfi‘ī opted for that which was closest to the Qur’ān and the undisputed Sunna of the Prophet.<sup>878</sup>

This methodology of *tawfīq* was both a reflection and a perpetuation of Shāfi‘ī’s rejecting the concept of a living Sunna. This despite the fact that the word for tradition (*ḥadīth*) is by no means with the meaning of the word Sunna, providing only one of its meanings. Later, Shāfi‘īs and Ḥanbalīs declared that *ḥadīth* is the only component of the Sunna. According to Schacht, Imām Mālik (c. 716-795), developed the concept of “*Living Sunna*” and, accordingly, concentrated on collecting mostly the practical applications of the Companions. It is well known that, in place of collecting single textual *ḥadīth* Mālik preferred to live in Madina and collect the practical traditions relating to daily life. As a logical result of this

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876 - Schacht, The Origin of Muḥammadian Jurisprudence, p. 4.

877 - Bukhari, Book 82, The Book of Punishment, chapter 7, ḥadīth no: 804. vol. 8, p. 519.

878 - Schacht, The Origin of Muḥammadian Jurisprudence, pp. 13, 14.



understanding, Imām Mālik did not hesitate to take the companions' words and action as a kind of Sunna. In his Muwaṭṭa' there are numerous examples of *ḥadīth* whose chain does not go back to the Prophet. Not surprisingly Shāfi'ī opposed this idea of a 'living tradition'.<sup>879</sup>

The concept of living Sunna is acknowledged by the Ḥanafīs. For example, Imam Abu Yūsuf<sup>880</sup> accepted traditions only if they were generally known. Thus Abu Yūsuf quoted the following tradition in which the Prophet made it clear that *ḥadīth* should be judged by the Qur'ān: "Tradition from me will spread; those that agree with the Qur'ān are really from me, but what is related from me and contradicts the Qur'ān is not from me".<sup>881</sup>

Before Shāfi'ī, utilisation of traditions from the Companions and Successors was the norm. However, according to Shāfi'ī, traditions from the companions carry no authority when they conflict with information from the Prophet, and no tradition from the Prophet can be set aside for anything but another tradition from him. Shāfi'ī comes up with the argument that any conflict between *ḥadīth* and Sunna represents no problem whatsoever as it is assumed, *a priori*, that the two areas cannot conflict. Thus one is faced with an argument in which the conclusion rules out the premises, to which one might legitimately ask, "where is the logic?" It follows from this that every single tradition of the Prophet, without exception, has to be accepted. Clearly the scope for using one's intelligence is rather limited in this understanding, if not completely redundant. Shāfi'ī justified this rather mystifying system by claiming that only questions relating to human opinions are legitimate

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879 - Ibid., p. 9.

880 - Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥabīb al-Anṣārī al-Kūfī al-Baghdadī Abū Yūsuf was one of the famous students of Abū Ḥanīfa and a great scholar of fiqh. For some time he was a judge in Baghdad where he died. Some of his books are: al-Kharāj, al-Āthār, al-Nawādir, Ikhtilāf al-Amsār, Adab al-Qāḍī, al-Amālī fi al-Fiqh.

881 - Schacht, The Origin of Muḥammadian Jurisprudence, p. 28.

areas for human reason. The *ḥadīth* and Sunna are outside of this category as they are based on divine authority.<sup>882</sup>

The aim of Shāfi'ī was not to change the meaning of Sunna, but rather to establish it on what he regarded as the firm foundation of text. In spite of the manifest difficulty which he experienced with this project, his ideas nevertheless gained wide currency and became the object of *taqlīd*, or blind following. This development had disastrous consequences for the Islamic understanding of wisdom, which lost much of its relevance in this climate of stagnation. Since Islamic wisdom was particularly manifested in the Sunna, the revolution in the understanding of that concept carried with it some very negative implications for the wisdom tradition. Thus I think it is reasonable to argue that any attempt to reformulate Islam in the context of the modern world should begin by searching once again for the dynamic wisdom which is latent in the Qur'ān and the Sunna.

### 3- Abandonment of consultation:

Even a cursory look at the Qur'ān and Sunna shows that there is no detailed and fixed body of legislation with which an entire community can be governed. Therefore Islam recognises that many general aspects of a community's affairs represent a type of autonomous sphere in which flexibility is appropriate. In cases where the Qur'ān is silent on a particular matter, the Prophet, before taking any final decision, would always consult with the companions and the tribal representatives of the time.

The first generation after the Prophet maintained this consultative style, both in central and local government. It is clearly anachronistic to transpose current political concepts into ages which had a completely different understanding of political processes, nevertheless one is led to think, from the evidence available, that the early period after the prophet was characterised by a quite pronounced level of decentralised consultative democracy. Thus all of the major tribal groupings were included in the decision making processes of the state, a practice which remained prevalent during the office of the first two caliphs and the first six years of

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882 - Ibid., pp. 3, 11-13.



Uthmān's tenure, a period which enjoyed relative political stability. When this representative system broke down during the second half of Uthmān's tenure of office, it ignited the first of a series of civil wars, with perhaps the main issue being the re-establishment of the prophetic consultative system.

The direct result of this conflict was the accession to power of the governor of Syria Mu'āwiya I, son of the Meccan aristocrat Abu Sufyan. At the end of his long ruling period, Mu'āwiya broke with the established precedent of leaving the question of succession open to the community by autocratically appointing his own son Yazid to be successor to the position of Caliph. The age of the monarchical system had now begun and, as is well known, monarchies are not renowned for their willingness to consult. Thus the prophetically established consultative system was relegated largely to the realms of the past with this political upheaval.

There is a clear consensus among Muslim scholars that the monarchical system had a profoundly negative impact on Islamic history. On the one hand, one has the irrefutable evidence that the great majority of these ruling blocs largely failed properly to implement the Qur'anic commands and Prophetic wisdom. The second, though obviously linked, problem was that these same blocs spent most of their time attempting to consolidate their monopolisation of political power against unwanted interference.

In short, the demise of the practice of consultation resulted in the main objectives of Islamic wisdom, justice and equality losing their central place in the Islamic states. The long term result of this dual loss was an increase in corruption and a corresponding decline in ethical behaviour.

#### **4- *Taqlīd* stupefaction in Islamic law:**

Islamic law is not static, there being many dynamic aspects within it from which Muslim jurists can derive new rules to accommodate to changes both in the environment and in society. In this respect Muḥammad Asad maintained that only the *nuṣūṣ* of the Qur'ān and guidance of the Sunna represent the real, eternal Islamic

law (*Sharī'a*), many of the subjective conclusions of the jurist (*fuqahā'*) being reflections of a particular time and mentality.<sup>883</sup>

Although neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunna covers all areas of life in detail, they do provide the fundamental framework of principles from which Islamic law can be deduced and constructed. From the *Sharī'a* point of view God has left quite a large area for the free exercise of human intellect and desires. These unspecified areas must be approached through people's own experience and customs.

The companions generally asserted that their understanding, decisions and actions were not binding, and none of them ever regarded his own *ijtihād* as the final word.<sup>884</sup> Such humility is indicative of their utter reliance on the Qur'ān and prophetic wisdom. The first jurists followed in the footsteps of the companions' self acknowledged limitations, regarding both their *ijtihād* and the companions' understanding as interpretations. For this reason the first generation of Muslim jurists took from the Prophet and the companions the method of making *ijtihād*, or the way of deriving a rule from the Qur'ān and the Sunna, rather than simply accepting the contents blindly.

However, later on some scholars began to accept every detail of the companion's *ijtihād*, despite the fact that some of these did not relate to the *Sharī'a*, with others only tenuously relevant even to common-sense.<sup>885</sup> After this first generation juristic studies were maintained and Islamic understanding came to be formulated through different sects. As a result people began to follow one or other of the imams.

To escape the above discussions and follow the model of the Prophet, some scholars undertook to compile all of the details concerning the routine matters of the life of the Prophet and companions into the Islamic legal system. However, the sheer complexity of the material in question meant that it was particularly difficult for the average believing Muslim to decipher what exactly was relevant. Once this state of

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883 - Asad, *The Principle of State and Government in Islam*, pp. 12, 13.

884 - *Ibid.*, p. 25.

885 - *Ibid.*, p. 26.



affairs had been reached, people were faced with the choice of either abandoning the whole project completely, or following a recognised master in the field. From this it was only a short step to blind sectarian following, or in Arabic *taqlīd* (imitation).

It is true that those who followed the Imāms did not on the whole explicitly deny the necessity of *ijtihād* in the case of new problems. However, the combined factors of political corruption and some rather abstract theological speculation resulted in the emergence of *taqlīd* in the life of Muslims. This, of course, paralysed the dynamic nature of wisdom understanding. *Taqlīd* as a blind and unquestioning obedience severed the links with the original sources, the Qur'ān and the Sunna, incorporating the practice of consultation which was applied by the Prophet and his companions.

*Taqlīd* was a gradual process which in time precipitated the decline of many Islamic institutions and sciences, as well as the moral standards of Muslims in general. Once *taqlīd* was accepted as the dominant paradigm, the dynamic structure of Muslim thought was lost and the beginning of the end of Muslim civilisation was underway.<sup>886</sup> In the final analysis this destructive process is attributable to two main factors: firstly, the atmosphere which encouraged free thinking was fatally eroded. Secondly, and as a direct result of this, Muslim thinkers gradually lost the ability to distinguish between those parts of the Islamic commands which were static and those which were dynamic. The logical outcome of such tendencies can be seen most clearly in the destructive and divisive phenomenon of *taqlīd*.

This turn in the tide of Islamic history therefore signalled the end of the centrality of Islamic wisdom in the formulation of Islamic law. Wisdom itself did not disappear entirely from the cultural/intellectual stream within Islamic civilisation, finding new outlets of expression in philosophy and Sufism.

However, when Muslim philosophers began to combine Islam and philosophy on the question of belief, many orthodox Sunni thinkers revolted, including such

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886 - Sardar, *The Future of Civilisation*. p. 54.

renowned thinkers as Ghazālī and Ibn Taymiya. Here I will focus on the position of the former of the two.

### 5- The opposition of Ghazālī to Philosophy:

As a result of the above reasons Islamic wisdom became weak in the mainstream Muslim intellectual culture, and Muslim thinkers moved towards a Neoplatonist philosophical outlook and various forms of mysticism in an attempt to fill the vacuum left behind. In effect an attempt was underway to produce a new form of theoretical wisdom (*falsafā*) which would manifest a theosophical interpretation of Islam.

The attempt to synchronise elements of Hellenistic philosophy with Islam met with opposition from Muslim orthodoxy right from its inception, and culminated in Ghazālī's uncompromising rejection of philosophy. However, and notwithstanding the intensity of his fulmination, Ghazālī's seems to have directed his opposition to the *Mashshā'i* philosophers, and particularly Ibn Sīnā and Fārābī, rather than philosophy in any wider sense of the word.

The orthodox backlash, epitomised by Ghazālī, led to two important consequences. Firstly, Ghazālī's refutation signalled the demise of philosophy in the Sunni world. From this point the philosophical tradition was squeezed out of Arab domains, resurfacing in Spain through the influence of Ibn Rushd and Ibn al-'Arabī, and in Iran, where the influence of Suhrawardī and his disciples ensured the continued vitality of philosophy for a considerable period. Ibn Rushd's abiding legacy was to bequeath to the philosophical sphere as a strong mysticā character.

One can argue that Ghazālī's attack led many Muslim thinkers to abandon its use, and as a result philosophy reasserted itself through Sufism. Since Ghazālī did not attack Sufism in his own lifetime as the philosophical infiltration had not at that time occurred. Rather Ghazālī recommended Sufism as the best representative of the Islamic way of life. In fact it was 'Arabī's philosophical influence which proved to be the decisive factor in spreading the union of philosophy and Islam through the framework of a mystical philosophy through the Islamic world. Indeed, I do not think it would be an exaggeration to claim that 'Arabī's attempt to



synthesise philosophy and religion proved more successful than the attempt made by the Neoplatonist Muslim philosophers.

The upshot of the preceding account is that the opposition, which found such powerful expression in Ghazālī, failed to bring a final solution to the perceived conflict between Islam and philosophy. In fact, the defensive orthodox reaction only succeeded in pushing the combination into ever increasing peripheral intellectual movements, often defined through their very antithesis to the mainstream framework. In contrast to this, by the time its result gained entirely opposite consequence. Ibn 'Arabī's philosophical Sufism made again the same reconciliation between Islamic doctrine and philosophy in a mystical form. It is in light of this that one can understand the openly sceptical attitude all over the Muslim world towards the ideas propounded by Ibn 'Arabī's philosophical Sufism.

Thus one important effect of the orthodox reaction through Ghazālī's writing was to push the philosophical dimension into the unorthodox framework of Sufism. One may add to this event Ibn al-'Arabī's formulation of a type of philosophical Sufism, another instance of the previously accepted combination of Islam and philosophy reappearing in the guise of pantheistic mysticism.

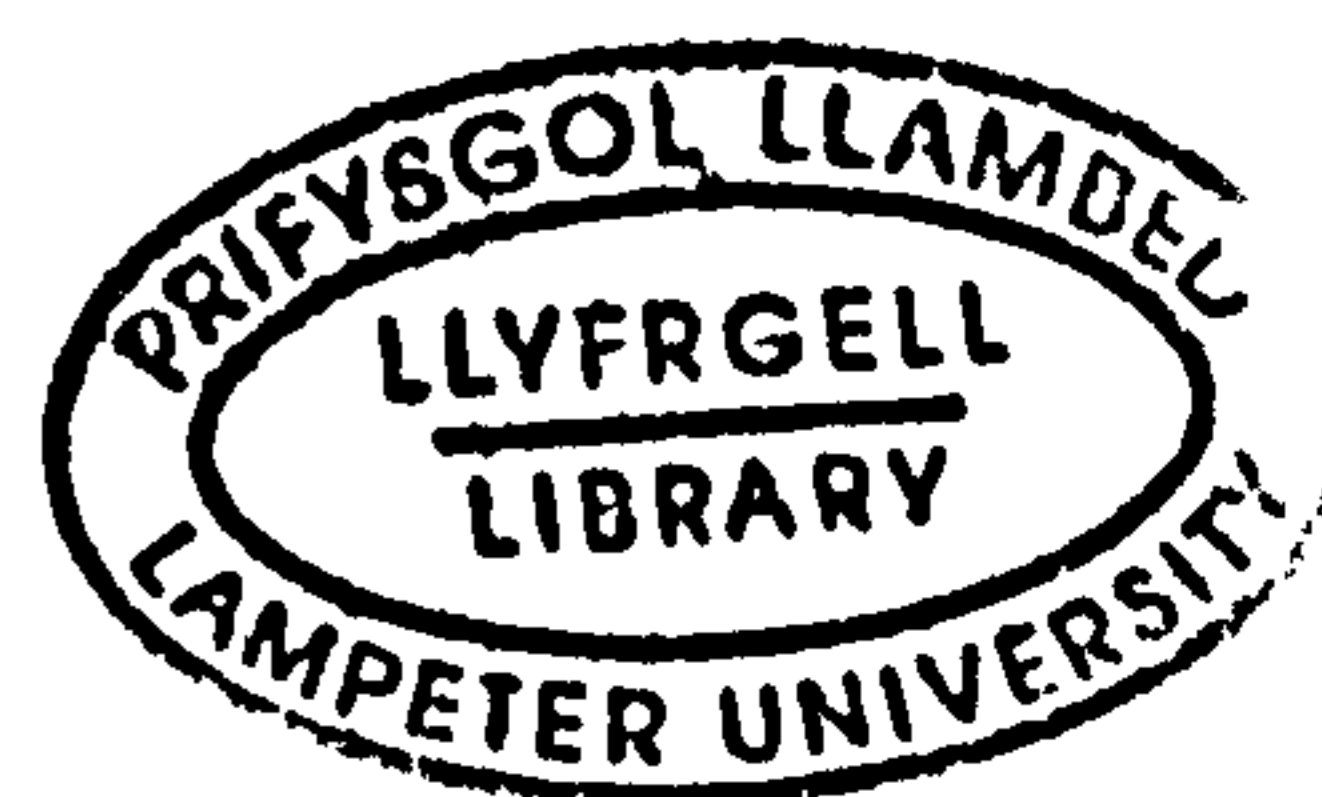
The second consequence was that Islamic wisdom also lost its central place in mainstream thought. This consequence is in reality closely linked to the first, since many of the philosophical writings were concerned with the application of wisdom in everyday affairs, rather than pure Greek philosophy. The result of the orthodox reaction can be gauged from the fact that many thinkers could no longer adequately distinguish the dynamic Islamic wisdom from the supposedly subversive philosophical elements. Thus in effect the refutation of philosophy became also the refutation of Islamic wisdom.

### Conclusion:

Neglect of the Qur'ān, revision of the meaning of Sunna and the cessation of the practice of consultation facilitated the rise of *taqlīd*. However, the negative tendencies which accompanied this phenomenon were surpassed when Ghazālī's opposition to philosophy, and the later orthodox attack on philosophical Sufism,

resulted in the decline of both philosophy and wisdom in the Muslim world on a significant scale. The effective re-union of religion and philosophy in the guise of Sufism allowed thinkers within this framework to extend their interpretations considerably beyond the scope afforded to the orthodox wing. For this reason Sufi mysticism has met with constant hostility throughout the Muslim world.

Orthodox scholars, including Ghazālī, were themselves not opposed to foreign and new ideas, but to their reconciliation with Islamic aspects and their threat to the essence of Islamic belief. In this respect also Muslim scholars did not reject Sufism itself but they did not accept philosophical Sufism because it was a mixed product in which many original Islamic beliefs and practices were harmed strongly. Although after Ghazālī's attack on philosophy many aspects of Islamic wisdom understanding passed into Sufism, the combination of Sufism and philosophy did not give the free room for the convenient progression which was a feature of original Islamic wisdom understanding.





## CONCLUSION

### General Conclusion:

1. Wisdom is something to be directly applied, the fruits of which are correspondingly of a practical nature, rather than theoretical knowledge. Parallel to this, Islamic wisdom is the dynamic heart of Islam, the revealed hermeneutical method through which Islam can become a living societal reality.
2. In the Qur'ān, wisdom (*ḥikma*) was used as a guideline and method of true understanding whereby the commands of God could be applied accordingly. Therefore, Islamic wisdom is the application method of the Divine revelation which was inspired to the Prophet of Islam.
3. The Prophet had left behind not only the book, but also the teaching of wisdom (*ḥikma*) by which the Divine principles could be understood and applied. Thus, Islamic wisdom becomes clearer through focusing on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, in conjunction with a knowledge of the Qur'ān incorporating an historical dimension.
4. Although, the death of the Prophet Muḥammad brought an end to his personal guidance, to understand the Islamic wisdom requires also a knowledge of the behaviour, attitudes, and practices of the companions which were later formulated as a body of legislation. From this legacy one can deduce the principles of Islamic thought, within which wisdom is embodied as a complete way of life.
5. When historically the wisdom tradition became weak in the application of Islamic law, philosophy and Sufism emerged as the bearers of the wisdom tradition. Therefore Islamic wisdom was not destroyed, but rather found a new channel of expression in the philosophical and mystical area which is a tolerant approach and methods of instruction.
6. Around the six century B.C. in Greece, ancient wisdom experience gradually gained a systematic character and gave birth to philosophy. Although philosophy (love of wisdom) was a purely systematised form of conceptual thought, mainly

as recognised opposed to a religious phenomenon, the divisions between the two forms almost manifested as diametrical opposition, due to the fact that the fundamental aims and goals to be realised were so similar.

7. Although the influence of Greek rationalistic philosophy was virtually non-existent amongst the first generation of Muslim scholars, their strong faith and wisdom understanding remained the backbone on which the faith was constructed.
8. When the Muslims thinkers confronted with Hellenistic philosophy in Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia in the seventh century A.D. they did not oppose the academic functions of these schools and their masters. Rather they benefited from the experience of these schools. In these schools, Eastern understanding of wisdom and religious ideas such as Persian and Indian wisdom had been mixed with Greek philosophy and Christian theology.
9. The first systematic Muslim thinkers Mu'tazilīs' free methods of inquiry and al-Kindī's philosophical thinking, coupled with the emergence of translations of Greek philosophical texts, led to attempts by Muslim scholars to reconcile Greek philosophy and Islamic teaching.
10. As a result of this chemistry almost all Islamic philosophical studies can be seen as a kind of speculative or theoretical wisdom in which religion (Islam), philosophy and ancient life philosophies mixed in a systematic teaching.
11. It is generally accepted that Muslim philosophers were affected to some degree by Hellenistic philosophy and ancient Eastern civilisations including those of India and Persia. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Muslim philosophers fed from the apocryphal texts, they were able to reach their own separate conclusion.
12. Wisdom in Sufism gained a distinctive character, assuming the role of an esoteric inner dimension of spiritual training. In this connection the Sufi concept of *ma'rifa*, and the legal concept of *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) can be viewed as converging on much the same subject matter, namely practical wisdom understanding and dynamic knowledge of Islamic life.



13. Therefore it is correct to say that Islamic philosophy has sometimes, quite naturally, borrowed concepts and formulations from other sources, including some Neoplatonist doctrine, Christian mysticism as well as Persian and Indian spiritual concepts; it has always assimilated these foreign elements into its own view of wisdom understanding.
14. There is no doubt that both the Muslim philosophers and Sufis wanted to serve Islam by keeping the message of religion alive. The main difference between philosophy and Islamic wisdom is that while philosophy derives constantly new premises from its own conclusions, Islamic wisdom has always been sought in the Divine revelation.
15. As a result of the Prophetic wisdom and the guideline, which represents the living example, Muslim thinkers have constructed their own schools of theology, philosophy, and theosophy. For this reason Islamic wisdom and philosophy cannot be dichotomised into two separate compartments.
16. Islamic wisdom and philosophy enjoyed a certain mutual acceptance within the classical sources until Ghazālī launched his famous attack against the non-Islamic nature of Philosophy which in turn led to Ibn Rushd's counter-attack. The most important consequence of this scholarly rift was the corruption of both philosophy and wisdom.
17. Although in many cases their methods are different, wisdom and philosophy have moved in each others' atmosphere and influenced one another. In the liberal atmosphere of these two, the other two aspects of life science and religion, served humanity in the process of establishing many civilisations.
18. Therefore, these four close learning processes of culture religion, science, philosophy and wisdom, should not be used in place of each other. This provision should be adhered to particularly, when they focus on the same subject.

## SELECTED GLOSSARY

-A-

**'adāla:** Justice.

**'ādāt:** Social customs.

**'adh:** Justice, probity or uprightness of character.

**'ahādiya:** The aspect of unity.

**ahl al-bayt:** Immediate relatives of the Prophet.

**ahl al-kitāb:** Literally the 'people of the book' who believe in a holy scriptures, in general Christians, Jews and Sabaeans.

**ahkām:** Orders according to Islamic law.

**ahwāk:** A corresponding series of states; conditions or customs of people.

**ākhirā:** The next world, the world of resurrection and eschatological realities

**Allāh:** Allah is the Islamic name for God, to whom all things of superiority belong.

**'amah:** Acts; living up to 'ilm.

**'amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar:** To order the doing of good and prohibit the doing of wrong. This task is one of the important precepts of every school within Islam.

**'anāšir:** Elements of a unity.

**anṣār:** Literally 'the helpers'. The epithet given to the Madineans who helped the Prophet Muḥammad and his friends who immigrated to Madina.

**Apeiron:** (G) According to Anaximander the basic material was "Apron" or 'boundless'. It is indeterminate, eternal and equally material from which all things originated and all thing will return to it.

**'aqā'id:** Literally means belief. In Islamic writing it refers to the science of belief.

**'aqīda:** Islamic belief, creed, doctrine, dogma or article of faith in Islam.

**'aql:** Intellect; reason or rationality.

**'aql al-fa'āl:** Active intellect.

**'aql al-hayyulāni:** Potential intellect or reasoning capacity.

**'ārif:** Literally means one who knows easily. In Sufism it refers to someone who posses of knowledge of God.

**arche:** In philosophy the First matter or origin of the cosmos.

**asbāb al-nuzūl:** The case of the historical order of events associated with the Qur'ān.



**Ash 'ariyya:** One of the most popular theological school, which was named after Abu al-Hasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī. They defended orthodoxy faith in Islam against corruption.

**aṣḥ:** Literally root, essence, base that upon which something else is built. Technically, the sources of law or the principles of jurisprudence.

**'asr al- sa'āda:** Literally means the "century of happiness". In Islam it was named for the time of Prophet Muḥammad.

**'afw:** Pardon, forgiveness.

**āya:** Literal means sign, indication. Verse, especially a verse of the Qur'ān.

**āyāt:** Signs, verses of the Qur'ān.

**azaliyya:** Unlimited timing.

### -B-

**Badr:** The place lies to the south-west of Madina where the first major battle took place between the Muslims, and the Meccan pagans in 624.

**bait al- ḥikma:** House of wisdom. An academy founded in 830 in Baghdād for the purpose of translating Greek texts on philosophy and the sciences into Arabic.

**baqā' wa fanā':** Subsistence and effacement; sufi terms referring to the stages of the development of the mystic in the path of gnosis.

**bāṭin:** Interior, hidden knowledge pertaining to the heart and soul:

**burhān:** Proof, evidence, sign.

### -D-

**dahr:** Time

**Dahriyya:** In Islamic philosophy a name for the atheism, materialism, and naturalism.

**dahrīs:** Muslim naturalist and atheist philosophers.

**dalīl:** Evidence, argument, proof, and guide that indicates a rule (*ḥukm*) in the jurisprudence.

**ḍarūrī:** Necessary things in human life.

**ḍarūrāt:** Necessities of life.

**da'wa:** Giving invitation to Islam.

**Demiurgus:** (G) Demiurgus first time was used by Socrates as a sauna of God which direct Socrates to chose correct way.

**dhikr:** Remembering God or reciting the names of God as a kind praise and glorification.

**dīn:** Usually translated to mean religion and tradition. This word, however, implies transaction between God and human beings. Accordingly, practising the *dīn* (Islam) means repaying one's debt to Allāh.

*dīnī*: Something concerning religious aspects.

*dunyawī*: Worldly, material things.

-E, F-

*fahīsha*: An evil way, or unlawful things.

*falsafa*: Philosophy.

*falafa al-ulā*: Metaphysics or the first principles of the special sciences.

*fanā'*: Annihilation or extinction, a state in Sufism in which the soul becomes annihilated before God.

*fanā' li 'l-tawḥīd*: Extinction in unity.

*faqīh*: Jurist, scholar of *fiqh*.

*farḍ*: Obligatory duties which are commanded by God through the Qur'ān and Sunna.

*frā'id*: Obligatory duties in Islam.

*fāsiq*: A person who engages in evil talk and deeds or evil livers, disobedient.

*fatwā*: *Ijtihād* or legal opinion through Muslim Jurists.

*fiqh*: Islamic jurisprudence.

*fikr*: Reflection, or thought.

*furqān*: Proof, evidence. Basic distinguishing between two aspects. Also one of the names of Qur'ān.

*far'*: One branch of analogy in Islamic law.

*furū'*: Branches or particulars of *fiqh* (*furū' al-fiqh*),

-G-

*ghāya*: Aim and Goal. The extent of application.

*ghayb*: Unseen realities.

-H-

*ḥadīth*: Speech, report or narrative of Prophet. Technically *ḥadīth* include the sayings, action and approbation of the prophet Muḥammad.

*ḥadīth qudsī*: A Divine saying. A term used for a *ḥadīth* which relates a revelation from Allāh in the language of the Prophet Muḥammad.

*ḥajj*: Pilgrimage to Mecca held once a year which is binding on all Muslims to perform once in a life-time if they can afford.

*ḥakīm*: Wise person.

*ḥāl*: A spiritual condition of sufis.

*Hanafīs*: One of Sunni schools of law developed in Kūfa in Iraq whose eponym was Abū Ḥanīfa (699-767).



*ḥalāl* : In Islam an act which is permissible to do, or an article which is permissible to consume.

*Ḥanbalīs* : the Sunni school of law named after Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (780-855) a famous scholar of *ḥadīth*.

*ḥaqq* : the right cause, right of Allāh, or public right.

*ḥaqīqā* : The truth.

*ḥarām* : In Islam an act which is forbidden to do, or an article which is forbidden to consume.

*heylozoism* : I ancient Greek a philosophical doctrine that life is one of the properties of matter.

*ḥilm* : Forbearance.

*ḥijrah* : The migration of the Prophet Muḥammad from Mecca to Madina; the beginning of the Islamic era in 622 A.D.

*ḥikma* : Wisdom, secret science or useful sayings, Islamic philosophy. Divine which embodied in the Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad.

*ḥiss* : Intuition, non materialistic sense.

*ḥudūd* : In Islam prescribed punishments by the authoritative texts.

*ḥukm* : The injunction of *Sharī'a*.

-I-

*'ibāda* : Prayer or Islamic rite.

*'iffa* : The temperance.

*iḥsān* : To confer favours or to perform an action in perfect form. The highest form of worship God, as if you see him and if you cannot achieve this attitude, you worship him bearing in mind that He sees you at all time.

*'ilm* : Knowledge, science, divine inspiration.

*'ilm al- tawḥīd* : The science of unity of God.

*'ilm al- uṣūl* : Science of methodology (of e. g. *fiqh*).

*ikhlas* : Sincerity to demand self sacrifice. One of the interior virtue of the faithful Muslim to keep free from admixture..

*ilāh* : God, Creator.

*ilāhī'yūm* : Metaphysicians, the followers of Aristotle and Plato.

*'illa* : In Islamic jurisprudence a legal principle which can provide the ground justifying the assimilation of a derived case to a basic case in the process of analogy.

*ilhām* : Revelation or inspiration.

*ijmā'* : Consensus. In Islamic Jurisprudence *ijmā'* is one of the four basic source of Islamic law. A kind of consensus or agreement upon a certain rule by the jurists.

*ijtihād*: Personal reasoning. Literally means 'exertion'; exertion of efforts by a qualified scholar or a group of qualified scholars to find out the Islamic point of view on a certain issue by applying the required knowledge..

*imām*: A religious leader or Caliph; an authority on religious science. It can be used to refer to the leader of prayers.

*īmān*: Trust, faith and acceptance. To believe in God.

*īmā'*: Implicit.

*al-insān al-kāmil*: The perfect man.

*'irfān*: Gnosis or esoteric inner knowledge.

*Islam*: Submission or surrender to God's will, as revealed to Muḥammad.

*Ismā'īlīs*: One of the Shī'ī groups. After the death of Imām Ismā'īl in 760 his followers established a secret sect against the 'Abbāsids Caliphs at Baṣra.

*istidlāl*: Inductive reasoning.

*istiḥsān*: In Islamic law, a discursive device used by some jurists whereby preference is given to a rule other than the one reached by the more obvious form of analogy.

*istinbāṭ*: Inference, deducing a somewhat hidden meaning from a given text.

*istiṣhāb*: Presumption of continuity, or presuming continuation of the status.

*istiṣlāḥ*: Consideration or public interest; a methodological principle whereby the welfare and well-being of both the individual and society as a whole are deemed paramount in reaching a legal judgement.

-J-

*Jahmiyya*: An early theological movement which found by Jahm. Their main believes were that the Qur'ān was created and God's knowledge were not eternal.

*jarḥ wa ta'dīl*: A technical term used in ḥadīth criticism with regard to the evaluation of transmitters of traditions for the acceptance (*ta'dīl*), or rejection (*jarḥ*). 'disparaging and declaring reliable':

*jibrīl*: The angel Gabriel. He is one of the greatest of all the angels through whom the Qur'ān was revealed by God to the Prophet Muḥammad.

*jūd*: Generosity.

-K-

*kufr*: Disbelief.

*kāfir*: Unbeliever, infidel.

*kalām*: Literary speech; often it used for the Islamic theology ('*ilm al-kalām*).

*kalām al-ilāhī*: Divine Speech.

*kashf*: Unveiling, intellectual intuition, discovery.

*khālq*: Phenomenal world.



***khalīfa***: Caliph.

***Khārijīs***: Some of the follower of 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib who fell out with him afterwards and deserted his ranks. They were extremist, uncompromising.

***khulafā' al-Rāshidūn***: The rightly guided Caliphs: the first Four Caliphs of Islam.

***kitāb***: Book, scripture, the Qur'ān and other revealed books.

***kalimah***: Word.

-L-

***laghw***: Discussion which is not useful.

***logos***: (G) The content of an argument. Also Heraclitus held an obscure logos doctrine in which logos appears as a kind of non-human intelligence that organises the discrete elements in the world into a coherent whole.

-M-

***Mecca***: In Arabic *Makka*, The holiest city in Islam, whose history is inextricably bound up with that of the Prophet Muḥammad himself. He lived there for much of his life. Muslims turn towards Mecca in prayer and undertake the pilgrimage to the Ka'bah in that city.

***māadda***: Matter.

***Medina***: In Arabic *al-Madīna* (the City). The second holiest city in Islam after Mecca. Its early name was *Yathrib*.

***makrūh***: improper, disliked, and abstained by the Prophet.

***māl***: Wealth, property.

***Mālikis***: One of Sunnī schools of law developed in Madina and named after Mālik b. Anas (713-795).

***maqāsid***: Purposes, goals or objectives.

***ma'rūf***: Reasonable and common action which is widely accepted in a community.

***ma'rifa***: Knowledge, gnosis, wisdom, also mental illumination knowledge about God.

***maṣlaḥa***: An acknowledge public interest. In Islamic Law it is a principle that the Sharī'a has determined goals or purposes.

***Mashshār***: Peripatetic, Muslim Aristotelian Philosophers.

***mīthāq***: Covenant. In Islam teaching covenant made between God and man before the creation of the world.

***mi'rāj***: The night of ascent. According to the Qur'ān, the Prophet was taken by Gabriel from Mecca to Jerusalem and from there to the highest heaven.

***mīzān***: Balance, scales.

***mufassir***: Commentator of the Qur'ān.

*muhājir*: "The migrants". This is the name for the Muslims who emigrated from Mecca to Madina in 622. The beginning of the *hijra* marks the first year of the Islamic calendar 622.

*maḥabba*: The way of love of God.

*muḥkam*: Perspicuous, a word or a text conveying a firm and unequivocal meaning. Verses from the Qur'ān which are not susceptible to interpret.

*mujtahid*: a qualified person who exercise personal reasoning, *ijtihād*.

*mulhid*: Heretical.

*mulk*: Kingdom, power and property.

*mu'min*: The person of faith. Muslim who has fully practised his beliefs in his daily life and who has developed his character.

*munāsib*: Purposes of Islamic law.

*munāsaba*: Affinity.

*munjiyāt*: Virtues.

*munkar*: Unknown, objectionable.

*murīd*: The novice in a sufi order.

*murshid*: A guide, a spiritual leader.

*murāqaba*: Contemplation, meditation, devotion.

*mushrikūn*: Polytheists, idolaters.

*Muslim*: A believer in Islam, one who has submitted to God.

*mutashābih*: Unintelligible, referring to a word or a text whose meaning is totally unclear. Also it usually is used for some verses of the Qur'ān that are beyond humans comprehension.

*mutakallim*: Theologians or the people of the *kalām*.

-N-

*nafs*: The human self. A force in man which wants him to harm himself religiously.

*nahy*: Prohibition.

*najis*: Unclean.

*nasl*: Progeny.

*naṣṣ*, : Literally text; an explicit provision of the Qur'ān or Sunna, a clear injunction, an explicit textual ruling.

*nisba*: Family name or descent name of a person.

*Nous*: (G) Anaxagoras' theory which refers to God who is the formation of the cosmos and has all knowledge about everything.

*nuṣūṣ*: The Islamic dogmas embodied in the Qur'ān and Sunna.



-O-

*Orphic religion*: A mystery religion of ancient Greece and Italy.

-P-

*pan*: One of the god of ancient Greeks.

*pharaoh*: A title of the ancient kings of Egypt. In Islamic terminology it is generally used to denote a despot or an aggressive man.

*pīr*: (F) Spiritual master or sufi master.

-Q-

*qadar*: The Divine degree in so far as it sets the fixed limits for each thing, or the measure of its being.

*Qadariyya*: The idea of those Muslim theologians who believe in free will, in contradistinction to the Jabriyya who believe in predestination.

*qāḍī*: Muslim judge.

*qāḍī al-qūḍāt*: The cardinal judge.

*qānūn*: Law or rule.

*qiyās*: Analogy; syllogism. The extension of rule (*ḥukm*), the process of forming Islamic judgements on the basis of the Qur'ān and Sunna.

*qibla*: In Islam direction towards the Ka'bah.

*Quraysh*: Arab community of Quraysh, an ancestor of the Prophet.

*Qur'ān*: The sacred book of Islam, often spelled in English as Koran which revealed gradually to the prophet Muḥammad in 23 years..

-R-

*Rasulallāh*: Muḥammad the Prophet of Allāh.

*rāwī*: Story-teller, transmitter of ḥadīth or old Arabic poetry.

*ra'y*: Opinion.

*religion*: The outward expression of belief.

*rhetoric*: The art of speech that pretends to significance but lacks true meaning.

*risālah*: Prophethood.

*risāla*: Treaties.

*rubūbiyah*: The aspect of lordship.

*rūḥ*: Soul.

*ru'yā*: Dream or a vision of Prophets and pious people.

-S-

*ṣabr*: Patience

*ṣafā'*: Purity.

*ṣawm*: Fasting.

*salām*: Good wish.

*sabab*: Cause, means of obtaining something.

*ṣalāt*: Literally means call, invocation, supplication, A name to the ritual prayer in Islam. A Muslim may perform his usual prayer alone or in company with his Muslim brothers.

*ṣaḥāba*: The word is used variously to denote both the Prophet's close friends and associates, and, more loosely, any one who saw the Prophet while he was alive.

*ṣarīḥ*: Explicit.

*shahāda*: Seen, in reality appears.

*shirk*: Polytheism, idolatry; worshipping someone or something except Allāh or associating something or someone with Him.

*Shaykh*: Master, guide. It is also used as a title for the head of the Islamic spiritual master or generally for the respect for Islamic religious leaders.

*shū'arā*: The consultation.

*Shāfi'īs*: One of Sunnī schools of law named after Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī.

*Shī'a*: The followers or partisans of 'Alī and the people of his house. Also the follower of the Shī'ī faith.

*shī'r*: Poetry.

*Sharī'a*: Literary, "the path to water source" the Divine law of Islam which governs the main aspect of a Muslim's life.

*sīrah*: The record of man's actions and exploits, the stories of the ancients. In Islamic writing refers to the biography of Prophet Muḥammad.

*ṣirāṭ*: The Bridge in the hereafter.

*sophia*: (G) Wisdom.

*Sunnī*: Followers of the Sunna, member of an Islamic-religious movement representing orthodoxy in Islam. Sunni school is the largest sect of Islam.

*sūrah*: A chapter of the Qur'ān. Each chapter is divided into a number of verses and the chapters are characterised as either Meccan or Madinan according to their place of revelation.

*Sufism*: Islamic mysticism.

*Sunna*: It is the second most important source of Islam, after the Qur'ān. A normative custom of the Prophet which is directly relevant to the religious guidance of Muslims.



-T-

*tābi'ūn*: (sing. *tābi'ī*) Followers; Successors of the companions of Prophet Muḥammad. The next generation of Muslims after the *Ṣaḥāba*.

*ṭābi'yūn*: Deist, naturalist.

*tibyān*: Guidance.

*tafsīr*: Explanation; in Islam normally refers to explaining or commentary the Qur'ān.

*ṭahāra*: Cleanliness.

*taḥsīn*: Commendable.

*taqwā*: Purity, abstinence, fear of Allāh, piety, righteousness.

*ṭaqlīd*: Literally means, 'imitation' but originally, conformity to the opinion of a leading jurist; later. Also *ṭaqlīd* means following without questioning.

*ṭarīqa*: Road, way or path. Sufī order or the spiritual way identified with Sufism.

*tarjīḥ*: Preference of one evidence over the other.

*tajalliyāt*: In Sufism refers to the manifestation.

*tashrī'*: Islamic legislation.

*tawakkul*: Reliance upon God and His creations.

*taṣawwūf*: Islamic mysticism or *Sufism*.

*tawātur*: Authentic transmission of the reports and text by the plurality of narrators. A narration, normally used in describing the narration of the Qur'ān and tradition, reported by so many people in the first generation that its authenticity cannot be doubted.

*tawba*: Repentance.

*tawḥīd*: The science of Islamic beliefs, the belief in the oneness of God. God is one in His Essence and His attributes as well as His act.

*ta'wīl*: Interpretation of a text but this interpretation not according to the obvious import of a given text, allegorical interpretation.

*ṭekke*: (T) Place where a *shaykh* trains his disciples.

*ṭibb*: The science of medicine.

*taḥṣīl*: Benefit.

-U-

*umma*: The community of Islam, a generation of Muslims which includes all those within the faith of Islam.

*uṣūl al-fiqh*: source methodology of Islamic jurisprudence.

*'umm al-kitāb*. The 'mother of all books', one of the names of the Qur'ān

*'urf*: Local customs.

**uṣūl:** Methodology or fundamentals of an Islamic science.

**Uḥud:** A hill to the west of Madina, which became the site of the second major battle between the Prophet Muḥammad, supported by the Muslims, and the Meccans in 625.

-V, W-

**vizīr:** (T) Minister, head of the administrative system.

**walī:** Guardian, the helper,

**wālī:** Governor, the ruler of a city or region.

**wājib:** Obligatory, strict obligation which Muslims should observe.

**wahm:** Groundless.

**waḥdat al-wujūd:** The "transcendent unity of being" from which Many sufis claimed that only God possess being, all that exists deriving its existence from the One Being.

**wahy:** Divine revelation or knowledge revealed to the Prophets from Allāh.

-Y-

**yaqīn:** The certainty, belief, sure knowledge.

-Z-

**ẓann:** Speculation, doubt, conjecture.

**ẓāhir:** Exterior, apparent knowledge or manifest (pertaining to the body) a technical term which normally refers to the apparent meaning of the text.

**zanādika:** Atheists, unbelievers in God and Last Day.

**zakāt:** One of the five pillars of Islam. The religious obligatory alms tax on Muslims to pay a predetermined percentage of the value of their annual savings to the Islamic state to be distributed to certain categories of people.

**zinā:** Adultery, fornication.

**zuhd:** Renunciation, asceticism or not setting one's heart on worldly things.



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